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The works of Mr. Archibald
M'Lean

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THE

WORKS

OF

MR. ARCHIBALD M'LEAN,

LATE

PASTOR OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH,

EDINBURGH.

WITH A

MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE, MINISTRY, AND WRITINGS,

BY WILLIAM JONES.

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WORKS

OF

ARCHIBALD M'LEAN.

VOL. V.—PART II.

PARAPHRASE AND COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.—CHAP. IX.—XIII.

APPENDIX.—FIVE DISSERTATIONS.

A

Paraphrase and Commentary

ON THE

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

CHAP. IX.

CONTENTS AND SCOPE.

IN the foregoing Chapter the apostle having briefly set forth the excellency of Christ's priesthood above that of the Levitical high-priests, in respect of the dignity and power to which he is advanced, the heavenly sanctuary in which he officiates, and the more excellent ministry which he hath obtained as mediator of a better covenant, he proceeds in this chapter to explain and illustrate these matters more fully; particularly what he had hinted (ver. 5.) concerning the Mosaic tabernacle and its priestly services, as being but a typical model and shadow of heavenly things.

He observes, that the first, or Sinaitic covenant, had indeed both ordinances of divine service and a worldly holy place, ver. 1.—Gives a particular account of the tabernacle, and of its outer and inner apartments, of which he speaks as of two tabernacles, enumerating the utensils pertaining to each, ver. 2, 3, 4, 5.—That the ordinary priests went always into the first apartment, or holy place, to perform the service, ver. 6. but into the second, or holy of holies, none were permitted to enter but the high priest alone, and he only on one day in the year, and not without blood, which he offered first for his own sins, and then for the errors of the people, ver. 7.—That by this exclusion of all others, both people and priests, from the inner apartment where the divine presence resided, the Holy Spirit signified, that the way into the heavenly holy place was not yet manifested, or laid open, while the first tabernacle had a standing, ver. 8.—That this tabernacle was but a parabolic or figurative representation unto the present time, in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered, which, with respect to conscience, cannot perfect him who worshippeth only with meat and drink-offerings, and divers immersions, and ordinances respecting the body, which were imposed on the Israelites until the time of reformation, when these typical institutions were to be laid aside, ver. 9, 10.

He next contrasts the ministry of Christ in heaven with that of the Levitical high-priests in the earthly tabernacle, and shews, That Christ

being come, an High-priest of future good things, through the service of a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands like the Mosaic, that is, not of this creation, nor by the blood of goats and of calves, such as the legal high-priests offered, but by his own blood, he entered once for all into the heavenly holy place, having obtained, not an annual, but an eternal redemption for us, ver. 11, 12.—And he argues that it is highly reasonable to believe that the blood of Christ should have such efficacy; for if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, had the effect, by virtue of divine appointment, to free the Israelites from temporal punishments, to cleanse their bodies from ceremonial defilements, and to fit them for approaching God with acceptance in the tabernacle worship;—how much more must the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without fault to God, be effectual, not only by divine appointment but intrinsic worth, to cleanse the conscience of sinners from the guilt of sin, and fit them for worshipping the living God in spirit and in truth, ver. 13, 14.—That for this reason he is the mediator of a new covenant, that his death being accomplished for the expiation of the transgressions committed under the first covenant, the faithful of all ages and nations may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance, ver. 15.

To shew that it was necessary that the new covenant should be ratified by the death of Christ,

he compares it in this respect to a testament, which is of no force or validity till ratified by the death of the testator, ver. 16, 17. Accordingly God's covenants with sinful men have ever since the fall, been made and ratified by the death and blood of sacrifice: and this, he particularly observes, was the case with the first or Sinaitic covenant, which was solemnly ratified and dedicated by slaying sacrifices and sprinkling the blood on the book and people, ver. 18, 19, 20.—That Moses afterwards likewise sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry; nay, that almost all things are according to the law, purified with blood, and that without shedding of blood there is no remission, ver. 21, 22.—That it was indeed necessary that the representations of the heavenly holy places should be purified, or made accessible, by the blood of slain animals; but this only shewed that the heavenly holy places themselves required a better sacrifice to render them accessible, namely, that of the Son of God, ver. 23. Accordingly he observes, that Christ hath not entered with his sacrifice into the holy places made with hands, which were only the figures of the true holy places; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our account, ver. 24.—Nor was it necessary to this end that he should offer himself often, as the high-priest entereth into the earthly holy place with fresh blood of animals every year; for as his death on earth would have been necessary to every such offering

he must in that case have often suffered since the foundation of the world: But now once, at the conclusion of the ages, he hath been manifested to abolish all farther sin-offerings, by the one effectual sacrifice of himself, ver. 25, 26. And as it is appointed to men to die but once as the punishment of Adam's sin, and after that to be judged according to their personal conduct; so Christ was offered but once to bear the sins of many; and having thereby obtained eternal redemption for them (ver. 12.) he will appear a second time to them who wait for him; not to offer another sacrifice for sin, but to put them in possession of eternal salvation, ver. 27. 28.

PARAPHRASE.

CHAP. IX. 1. Now the first *covenant* indeed had both ordinances of worship, and a worldly *sanctuary or* holy place.

2. For a tabernacle was prepared *consisting of two apartments,* the first in which was the candlestick, and the table, and the shew-bread; which *first apartment* is called The Holy *place.*

3. And behind the second vail *there is the inner* tabernacle, which is called The Holy of Holies;

4. Having the golden censer *on which the high-priest burned incense when he entered there,* and the ark of the covenant, covered every where *without and within* with gold, in which *inner tabernacle were*

also the golden pot having the manna, and the rod of Aaron which budded, and *within the ark* the tables of the covenant;

5. And above it the Cherubim of glory, *with outstretched wings* overshadowing the mercy-seat, *or cover of the ark, where the glory of the Lord rested as on a throne;* concerning which *things* it is not now *my design* to speak particularly.

6. Now these things being thus prepared, the *ordinary* priests go indeed at all times into the first *or outer* tabernacle, accomplishing the services:

7. But into the second, *or inner tabernacle,* the high-priest alone *goeth* once every year, not without blood, which he offereth for his own and the people's sins of ignorance:

8. The Holy Spirit, *by excluding all others from the inner tabernacle,* signifying this, that the way of the *true* holy *place, represented by that inner tabernacle,* was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle had a standing.

9. Which was a parable, *or figurative representation,* unto the present time, in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered, which cannot, with respect to conscience, make perfect him who worshippeth *God.*

10. Only *with offerings* of meats and drinks, and *with* divers immersions, and ordinances *respecting the purifying* of the flesh, imposed until the time of reformation.

11. But Christ being come, an High-priest of future good things, *procured* through *the services* of

a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is, not of this creation :

12. Neither by the blood of goats, and of calves, but by his own blood, he entered once into the *heavenly* holy *places,* having obtained eternal redemption *for us.*

13. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctify to the purifying of the flesh *from ceremonial defilements,* and fit them for admission to the tabernacle worship,

14. How much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without fault to God, cleanse your conscience from the guilt of dead works to serve the living God?

15. And for this *reason* he is the mediator of the new covenant, that death being undergone for the redemption of the transgressions *committed against* the first covenant, the called *and faithful* may receive the promise of *the* eternal inheritance.

16. *This new covenant which has the promise of the eternal inheritance, may be compared to a last will or testament in respect of its ratification ;* for where a *confirmed* testament *is,* the death of the testator must necessarily be brought *in.*

17. For a testament is firm over the dead; otherwise it hath not any force whilst the testator liveth : *So neither was the new covenant confirmed without the death or sacrifice of Christ.*

18. Hence *it is that* the first *or Sinaitic covenant* was not dedicated without blood.

19. For when Moses had spoken every precept, according to the law, to all the people, taking the blood of calves and of goats with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, *he* sprinkled both the book *of the law itself* and all the people,

20. Saying, "This *is* the blood of the covenant "which God hath enjoined unto you," Exod. xxiv. 7, 8.

21. Moreover, both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the *divine* service *which were afterwards made and set in order*, he in like manner sprinkled with blood.

22. And almost all things are, according to the law, cleansed with *sacrificial* blood; and without shedding of blood there is no remission *of sins.*

23. *It was* therefore necessary indeed that the *typical* representations of things in the heavens, *such as the tabernacle and all its sacred utensils*, should be cleansed by these *sacrifices;* but the heavenly things themselves, *which they typified*, by better sacrifices than these.

24. For Christ hath not entered *with his sacrifice* into the holy *places* made with hands, *which are only* figures [Gr. antitypes] of the true *holy places;* but into heaven itself, now to appear in the *immedidiate* presence of God on our account.

25. Nor *did he enter there* that he might offer himself often, as the high-priest entereth into the

holy *places* every year with other blood *than his own;*

26. For then he must often have suffered *death* since the foundation of the world; but now once, at the conclusion of the ages, he hath been manifested to abolish *all farther* sin-*offering* by the sacrifice of himself.

27. And like as it is appointed to men to die *but* once, *on account of the sin of the first man,* and after that the judgment takes place;

28. Even so the Christ having been offered once to bear away the sins of many, will, to them that wait for him, appear a second time without a sin-*offering* unto *their complete* salvation.

COMMENTARY AND NOTES ON CHAP. IX.

Ver. 1. *Then verily the first covenant*—] Many copies read ἡ πρώτη σκηνη, *the first tabernacle,* and others of good authority have only ἡ πρώτη, *the first,* without the substantive, which some think should be *tabernacle,* and others *covenant.* Those of the former opinion go back to ver. 5. of the preceding chapter for the connection, where the tabernacle and its service is mentioned, and consider all that follows respecting the two covenants, from that to this, as included in a parenthesis. But it is more natural, and suits the apostle's argument at least equally well, to understand by *the first* here, the Sinaitic covenant, which is twice termed *the first* in the foregoing chapter, ver. 7, 13, and also twice expressly mentioned, ver. 9. Besides, *tabernacle* here would make a tautology in this

with the beginning of ver. 2. For these reasons I think our English translators have very properly supplied the word *covenant* in this place. The apostle observes, that the first or Sinaitic covenant

—*had also ordinances of divine service*—] It had a variety of ceremonial and typical ordinances of religious worship pertaining to it, and which were to be performed by the priests in behalf of the people, exactly according to the manner prescribed.

—*and a worldly sanctuary.*] Two things belonged to the first covenant. It had both ordinances of divine service, and a holy place fitted up for, and appropriated to the celebration of these divine ordinances. As the word *sanctuary* is commonly used to signify a place of refuge, safety, and protection, and not of divine service, I think that ἅγιον here should have been translated *holy place*, as it literally signifies. It is sometimes used to distinguish the outer apartment of the tabernacle, from the inner or most holy place, as in Exod. xxvi. 33. Heb. ix. 2. At other times, it is used more largely, and comprehends the whole of that sacred edifice or tent which Moses erected in the wilderness, and is most frequently termed *the tabernacle*, as in chap. viii. 5. and in this sense I understand the word ἅγιον to be used here.

It is termed ἅγιον κοσμικον *a worldly sanctuary*, or holy place, not to distinguish it from the inner apartment of the tabernacle, or holy of holies, which was a figure of heaven, nor because it was a representation *of the world*, or universe, as some have imagined; but it is so called because it was placed on earth, made of worldly materials, and with human hands, which things apply to the whole of the Mosaic tabernacle; and it is also termed *worldly*, by way of opposition to επουρανιον or *heavenly*, chap. viii. 5. namely, heaven itself, where Christ has entered to exercise his ministry, see chap. ix. 11, 12, 24. and of which that worldly holy place was only a figure. The apostle now proceeds to describe this worldly holy

place or tabernacle, and its outer and inner apartments, with their respective utensils.

Ver. 2. *For there was a tabernacle made*—] Its whole structure, and all that pertained to it, was prepared and fitted up exactly according to the model which God shewed to Moses on the mount, chap. viii. 5. We may observe here, that the apostle's reasoning in this epistle respecting the place of worship, and the priestly services, is founded on the original institution of the tabernacle and its services by Moses, and not on the temple and its services as appointed by David and Solomon, though these also were under divine direction. As to the dimensions and form of the Mosaic tabernacle, it was thirty cubits, or forty-five feet in length, ten cubits, or fifteen feet in breadth, and the same in height, so that it formed an oblong square. It was divided into two parts, which are spoken of as tabernacles;

—*the first*—] Namely, tabernacle, meaning the first division of it, or that part of it which presented itself first in entering from without. This was that sacred apartment

—*wherein was the candlestick*—] The candlestick was placed towards the south, it weighed a talent of beaten gold and was all of one piece; from its shaft proceeded six branches, three on each side, and a seventh in the middle, with a lamp on the top of each of them, containing pure olive oil and a wick for burning. These were trimmed and recruited by the officiating priest every morning and evening, See Exod. xxv. 31—39. chap. xxvii. 20. Who would have thought that a late learned and judicious commentator should not only imagine, that "the outward tabernacle was a representation of the "mundane system," but also suppose, with Josephus, "that the seven lamps of the candlestick were emblems of "the seven planets, whereby our world is enlightened!"

—*and the table*,—] This table was made of Shittim wood, and was placed towards the north; it was two cubits, or three feet in length, and one cubit, or a foot and

a half in breadth, and a cubit and a half, or two feet three inches in height, and was covered over with pure gold. See Exod. xxv. 23—26.

—*and the shew-bread;*—] The Hebrew literally is the *bread of the face*, or, *of the presence;* the Greek here is ἡ προθεσις των αρτων, and imports the loaves or cakes which were set before the face of the Lord in the holy place. These loaves were twelve in number, according to the number of the tribes of Israel, and they were placed on the golden table before mentioned, in two rows or piles, six in a pile one above another. They were of a considerable size, as each of them contained two tenth deals of fine flour, which some reckon about six wine pints. Every Sabbath day fresh loaves were placed on the table, and the stale ones removed, which none were permitted to eat but the family of Aaron, and that in the holy place. See Lev. xxiv. 3—9. Mat. xii. 4. The commentator above alluded to, considers the twelve loaves of the shew-bread as " a representation of the pro-" ductions of the earth, by which the lives of men and " beasts are sustained." So that, according to him, all the things hitherto mentioned represented nothing of a spiritual, but only of a worldly and material nature. But it is plain that the whole tabernacle, with its furniture and priestly services, were shadowy representations of heavenly things, chap. viii. 5. though the apostle's design in this verse is not to explain the mystical meaning of the particulars mentioned, but to shew that they belonged to that part of the tabernacle

—*which is called the sanctuary.*] That is, the first apartment of the tabernacle, called ἅγια, *Holy* or *Holies;* for, as PEIRCE observes, " It is doubtful whether we " are to take ἅγια, to be plural, and so to render it the " *sanctuary*, or whether we should read it in the singu-" lar ἅγια, and so turn the place with our margin, *Which* " [first tabernacle] *is called holy.*" The sense, however, is the same.

Ver. 3. *And after the second vail, the tabernacle which is called the holiest of all;*] A first vail is here implied, and it was that which covered the entry into the first apartment or holy place, of which we read, Exod. xxvi. 36, 37. chap. xxxvi. 37. The second vail was that which separated the inner from the outer apartment of the tabernacle, Exod. xxvi. 31—33. xxxi. 35. It was a large curtain of various colours, and of very curious workmanship. See Exod. xxvi. 31—35. After, or behind this second vail there was the tabernacle, or that inner part of the tabernacle which is called *the Holiest* of all, ἅγια ἁγιων literally *the Holy of Holies*, it being as it were the presence chamber of the God of Israel, where he fixed his dwelling and throne among them, and manifested himself in the most illustrious emblems of majesty and glory; and to Him as dwelling there, all their religious worship was directed, it being a representation of heaven. It was this glorious place

Ver. 4. *Which had the golden censer,—*] The censer was a kind of vessel in which live coals were put for burning incense, and its use on the day of the yearly atonement is thus described, "And he," viz. the high-priest, "shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the "altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense "beaten small, and bring it within the vail: And he shall "put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the "cloud of incense may cover the mercy-seat that is upon "the testimony, that he die not." Lev. xvi. 12, 13. Some suppose that the golden altar is here meant and not the golden censer, and that though it was not situated within the holy of holies, yet it may be said to have *had* it in respect of use; but I know of no reading that favours this opinion: The holy of holies *had* the golden censer even as it *had* the ark; for the word εχουσα equally refers to both, and imports that they were contained in it, which the golden altar never was. I therefore understand the apostle to mean the golden censer as is here expressed,

and which Josephus also testifies was kept in the holy of holies, *Lib. ii. contra Appion.* But as the high-priest durst not enter the holy of holies at all without carrying with him the censer with the burning coals and incense, a question occurs how he could come by the censer if it was kept there? To this it is answered, that it might be placed there just within the vail, and within reach of his hand, so that he could take it hence without entering into it himself.

—*and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold.*—] The κιβωτος, or ark, was a chest three feet nine inches in length, two feet three inches in breadth, and the same in height. See Exod. xxxvii. 1. It is termed, *the ark of the covenant*, because it contained the two tables of the covenant, as they are afterwards called. It was a rich and most beautiful piece of workmanship, being *overlaid round about with gold.* We are told that Bezaleel "over-laid it with pure gold within and without, and made "a crown of gold to it round about." Exod. xxxvii. 2. This crown of gold seems to have been a border round the top of it, both for ornament, and for fixing the lid or mercy-seat more firmly upon it.

—*wherein was the golden pot that had manna,*—] As it is expressly said "There was nothing in the ark, save "the two tables of stone which Moses put there at Horeb, 1 Kings viii. 9. and 2 Chron. v. 10. it is thought that the words εν ᾗ *wherein* or *in which*, refer to σκηνη the *tabernacle*, called the holiest of all, and that the sense is, "in which "tabernacle was the golden pot," &c. Or, if the pronoun ᾗ refers to the ark, which is more likely, it may be explained by what Moses commanded respecting the book of the law which he had written, probably the whole pentateuch; "Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark," Deut. xxxi. 26, that is, in a repository fixed to the side of the ark (See AINSWORTH and PATRICK on that place). In like manner, the golden pot and Aaron's rod might be deposited *in* or *by* the side of the ark, for they were not put within it. In this golden pot was put an omer, or

about six pints of the manna wherewith God fed the children of Israel forty years in the wilderness, and it was laid up before the Lord to be kept as a memorial for their generations. See Exod. xvi. 33, 34.

—*and Aaron's rod that budded,*—] This rod of Aaron though but a dry stick, yet the Lord caused it not only to bud, but to blossom and bear almonds, to shew that he had chosen the house of Aaron to the priesthood in preference to all others; therefore it was laid up before the testimony in the holy of holies, as a token and memorial of this. See Num. xvii. 2—11.

—*and the tables of the covenant:*—] Namely, the two tables of stone containing the Ten Commandments, which were written by the finger of God, Exod. xxxiv. 1. These were called, *the tables of the covenant*, Deut. ix. 9, 11, 15. because they contained the words of the covenant made with Israel, and also called *the tables of the testimony or witness*, Exod. xxxi. 18. xxxii. 15. because they were a standing witness of that covenant, and testified both what God required of them, and the obedience they had promised: And as these tables were deposited within the ark, hence the ark itself was termed *the ark of the testimony*, Exod. xxv. 22. chap. xxix. 35.

Ver. 5. *And over it the cherubim of glory, shadowing the mercy-seat,*—] *Over* or *above it*, namely the ark which contained the tables of the covenant, were *the cherubim*. This is a name for an order of angels, who appear to have been attendants on the Schechina, or visible glory of God. We read of their being placed at the east of the garden of Eden to keep the way of the tree of life, Gen. iii. 24. Ezekiel describes the shape and appearance of those cherubim which he saw in vision, chap. i. 8—15. x. 1—22. On both these occasions they had a fiery, flaming, and flashing appearance, and seem to have been employed as ministers of God's judgment upon sinners. How far the figures of the cherubim which were placed above the ark resembled these, is uncertain. They are here termed *the cherubim of glory*, not merely on account of their own

brightness, being made of beaten gold, but chiefly because of their relation to the visible glory of the Lord. They were two in number, one at each end of the mercy-seat, and beaten out of the same mass with it. They *overshadowed the mercy-seat*, viz. with their wings, a wing from each being stretched over it, till they both met in the middle and formed an arch; their faces also were opposite to each other, looking inwards towards the mercy-seat which was between them, Exod. xxv. 18, 19, 20. The ἱλαστηριον, *mercy-seat*, or propitiatory, was the lid or cover of the ark, called in Hebrew, *Cophoreth*, from *copher*, to cover, to appease, to expiate. On this the visible emblem of the divine presence rested as on a throne; for indeed it was a type of God's glorious throne in heaven. It was by the high-priest's sprinkling the blood of the sacrifices on and before this mercy-seat, that the atonement for the nation of Israel was completed, Lev. xvi. 14, 15. On this the visible symbol of the glory of God appeared, and from thence he gave forth his oracles; for he says to Moses, "There will I meet with thee, and I will commune with "thee (סעל) from upon the mercy-seat, from between "the two cherubim, which are upon the ark of the testi-"mony, of all *things* which I will give thee in command-"ment unto the children of Israel." Exod. xxv. 22. Hence he is said to sit between the cherubim, Ps. xcix. 1. for there the mercy-seat was placed, and prayers were addressed to him, as dwelling there, to shine forth in favour of his people, Psal. lxxx. 1. The apostle having mentioned the greater part of the sacred utensils of both the apartments of the tabernacle, adds,

—*of which we cannot now speak particularly.*] Or "concerning which it is not *my design* at present to "speak particularly;" that is, to give an explanation of the mystical or spiritual signification of each of these things in particular. But though he declines this, as it would detain him from coming directly to what he had chiefly in view; yet his manner of declining it implies

that each of these sacred utensils had a mystical signification. They were all constructed in form, size, and substance, according to particular divine directions, see Exod. xxv. throughout. The apostle terms them "the example "and shadow of heavenly things," Heb. viii. 5. the "pat-"terns of things in the heavens," chap. ix. 23. and these typical patterns included not only the tabernacle and its services, but every article of its furniture, as is plain from the Lord's words to Moses, "And let them make me a "sanctuary, that I may dwell amongst them: According "to all that I shew thee, *after* the pattern of the taber-"nacle, and the pattern of ALL THE INSTRUMENTS there-"of, even so shall ye make it." Exod. xxv. 8, 9. There are also other passages which seem to allude to, and even to explain some of these articles, such as the golden candlestick with its seven lamps, Rev. i. 12, 13, 20.—the golden censer, chap. viii. 3, 4.—the vail, Heb. x. 20.—the mercy-seat, or propitiatory, Rom. iii. 25. Heb. iv. 16. and perhaps the angelic cherubim, 1 Pet. i. 12. But as the apostle here declines giving a particular explanation of these things, I must be excused from attempting it.

Ver. 6. *Now when these things were thus ordained,*—] The tabernacle consisting of two apartments, with their respective utensils, being thus καλασκευασμενων, prepared and set in order,

—*the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service* of God,—] The ordinary priests went every day, and at all times as occasion required, into the outer, or first apartment of the tabernacle, to perform the appointed service, such as sprinkling the blood of the sin-offerings before the vail which hung between this place and the holy of holies; supplying the lamps of the candlestick with oil, morning and evening; burning incense upon the golden altar, and changing the shew bread on the table every week. These services the ordinary priests, it is likely, performed in their turn; yet we do not read of their being divided by lot into courses

till towards the end of David's reign. See 1 Chron. xxiv. 1—20.

Ver. 7. *But into the second* went *the high-priest alone, once every year,*—] By the *second* is meant the inner apartment of the tabernacle, called *the holies,* or *holy of holies,* in which the symbol of the divine presence resided. Into this sacred place none of the priests were permitted to enter, or so much as to look, excepting *the high-priest alone,* and he only *once every year,* that is, on one day every year, viz. the tenth day of the seventh month, Lev. xvi. 29. which month the Jews call *Tizri,* and answers partly to our September and October. On this great day of atonement for the sins of the whole nation of Israel, which they had committed throughout the preceding year, the high-priest entered within the vail at least three times; first with the censer of burning coals and the incense, that the cloud of it might cover the mercy-seat, and intercept his view of the divine glory, lest he should die, Lev. xvi. 12, 13. then he entered with the blood of the bullock, which he sprinkled seven times before the mercy-seat, ver. 14.; and lastly, he entered with the blood of the goat, which he sprinkled in like manner, ver. 15. So that he entered there,

—*not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people.*] His business there was to make an atonement for sin, which could not be done without sacrificial blood. Nor was it enough that the piacular victims should be presented, killed, and their blood shed at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; but the high-priest must carry with him a portion of their blood within the vail, and there offer it by sprinkling it seven times on and before the mercy-seat; for it was this which completed the atonement. It was thus that he offered the blood for himself, and for the errors of the people. The original words are ὁ προσφερει ὑπερ ἑαυτȣ και των τȣ λαȣ αγνοηματων, and may be rendered, which he of-
" fered for his own, and for the people's sins of igno-

" rance." He was first to offer the blood of the bullock for the sins committed by himself and his house, which probably included all the priests, he and they being sinners as well as the rest of the people, Lev. xvi. 6, 14. and being thus cleansed, and so fitted to make an atonement for others, he offered the blood of the goat for the sins of the whole congregation of Israel, ver. 9—15.

Now this is said to cleanse them once a year *from all their sins*, Lev. xvi. 30—34. But our apostle seems to limit this universal expression, by using the word αγνοημαΐων which signifies *sins of ignorance*. Not because they were committed merely through ignorance, but to distinguish them from capital offences and presumptuous sins, for which no sacrifices were provided by the law of Moses, but the sinner was to be cut off and die without mercy, Num. xv. 30, 31. Heb. x. 28.

The apostle having observed that none but the high-priest alone had access into the inner apartment of the tabernacle, explains the mystical meaning of this restriction,

Ver. 8. *The Holy Ghost thus signifying that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing.*] The words rendered " the way into the holiest of all," are την των ἁγιων ὁδον, literally " the way of the holies." By *the holies* here some understand the inner apartment of the Mosaic tabernacle called *the holy of holies;* and by *the first tabernacle* they understand its first or outward apartment; so that according to this the sense would be, that by the exclusion of the people and ordinary priests from the inner apartment of the tabernacle, the Holy Spirit signified, that the way into that inner apartment was not made manifest while its first or outer apartment was yet standing. But this is to make the figure or sign to signify itself; whereas the very nature and use of a type or figure is to signify some other thing of which it is the sign or representation. But by *the holies,* rendered *the holiest of all,* I understand

heaven itself, where Christ hath entered as High-priest by his own blood, ver. xii. 24. for it is the same word which is translated *the sanctuary*, of which he is minister, chap. viii. 2. and *the holiest* into which believers have boldness to enter by his blood, chap. x. 19. which blood hath opened a new and living way of access into it, ver. 20. both for their spiritual worship here, ver. 22. chap. iv. 16. and for their persons hereafter; for he hath entered there as their forerunner, chap. vi. 20. By *the first tabernacle* I understand the whole frame of the Mosaic tabernacle and its worship, called *the first*, even as the old covenant is so termed, ver. 18. and as being a prefiguration of the *true tabernacle*, which is not made with hands, Heb. viii. 2. chap. ix. 11. and into which Christ hath entered, ver. 24. The sense therefore seems to be this, that the Holy Spirit, by debarring all from the second apartment of the Mosaic tabernacle, excepting the high-priest alone, evidently shewed, that during the continuance of that tabernacle and its services, the way into the true holy place was not laid open or so clearly revealed as under the gospel.

Ver. 9. *Which was a figure for the time then present,*—] The Mosaic tabernacle, with its furniture and services, was a figure; the word is παραβολη, *a parable*, or figurative instruction *for the time* then *present*. The word *then* is a supplement, though not distinguished as such, and makes it to signify the past time, or during the Jewish economy; but the original, (εις τον καιρον τον ενεστηκοτα,) does not determine whether the time *then* present under the law, or the time *now* present under the gospel is intended; besides, as the particle εις admits of various significations in different connections, it is uncertain whether it should be here translated *for*, *unto*, or *concerning*; yet after all, the apostle's meaning is very plain. He informs us, that the Jewish tabernacle was a parabolical representation, and we know that it could be so only during the time it was appointed to continue in use; and as it was a representation,

of the true tabernacle, it must have referred to the present time of the gospel establishment, called "the time of "reformation" in the next verse;

—*in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;*] The common reading here is καθ' ὃν, *during which*, viz. time; but as some copies read καθ' ἣν, *in which*, viz. tabernacle, our translators have adopted the latter reading. The sense, however, is nearly the same; for as the gifts and sacrifices were offered *in the tabernacle*, so they could only be offered there *during the time* of its standing. Both gifts and sacrifices were presented and offered to God there; some of which were without blood, and others, of a more direct propitiatory nature, were slain sacrifices. But as these could not make satisfaction to God's justice as the moral governor of the world, for sins committed against the eternal rule of righteousness; so neither could they make him, who worshipped only with these sacrifices, perfect with respect to conscience: that is, they could not remove the disquieting burden of guilt, and fear of its punishment, from his conscience, nor give him the enjoyment of peace with God. The insufficiency of these and all other legal institutions to perfect the worshipper as pertaining to the conscience, is evident from their very nature, they being external bodily ceremonies.

Ver. 10. Which stood *only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed* on them *until the time of reformation.*] It is generally thought that some words are wanting to connect this with the preceding verse. Our translators have inserted the words *which stood, i. e.* which gifts and sacrifices consisted *only in meats*, &c. PEIRCE and others think there is no occasion for any supplement, and that the connection stands thus, "These gifts and sacrifices could not make perfect, "with respect to conscience, him that worshipped *only* "*with meats and drinks*, &c. But though I have thus

stated the connection in the paraphrase, I do not think that all the purifying rituals which the apostle refers to here, and in ver. 13. can properly be termed *gifts and sacrifices*, though some of them were, and others of them were closely connected with these.

By *meats and drinks*, I understand the apostle to mean meat and drink-offerings, or sacrifices consisting of meats and drinks. The sacrifices were termed the *meat* or *food* of God's house, Lev. iii. 16. chap. xxi. 17. and were connected with drink offerings, which were all to be of wine, Exod. xxix. 40, 41. Num. xv. 5, 7, 10. The *divers washings* (βαπτισμοις) or rather *immersions*, were to be used on various occasions both by the priests and people, to cleanse them from any impurity they might have contracted, and to fit them for approaching God in his worship. See Lev. xv. xvi. 4, 24. xvii. 15. Num. xix. These, and such like outward purifications, he calls δικαιωματα σαρκος, *carnal ordinances*, literally, *justifyings* or *righteousnesses of the flesh:* things which cleansed the body from ceremonial defilements, but not the spirit or conscience from moral guilt.

These rituals were επικειμενα, imposed or laid on the Israelites as a burden, as Peter observes, Acts xv. 10. And, indeed, considering their number, variety, and frequency, with the minute attention, labour, and expence which they required, they must have been a very great burden. But as these sacrifices and bodily immersions were altogether insufficient to purify the conscience and to introduce sinners as pardoned persons into the gracious presence of God; so they were never designed to continue but only *until the time of reformation;* that is, until the coming of Christ, when he was, by the sacrifice of himself, to abolish the Aaronical priesthood and tabernacle services, procure remission of sins and perfection of conscience, and to introduce a religious worship more acceptable to God, a worship in spirit and in truth, Rom. vii. 6. John iv. 23, 24.

The apostle having described the earthly tabernacle with its furniture and ineffectual services, proceeds now to speak of those things which they prefigured, namely, the heavenly tabernacle, and Christ's effectual ministry there. These he describes as follows,

Ver. 11. *But Christ being come, an High-priest of good things to come,—]* I am not certain whether παραγενομενος should be rendered *being come* as here, or *being made*, as some understand it. It does not appear to refer to Christ's *coming* into the world at his birth, or when γενομενον, *made* of a woman, Gal. vi. 4. for though that was necessary to his being a merciful and faithful High-priest, Heb. ii. 16, 17.; yet he did not act in that capacity previous to his offering the sacrifice of himself. If the word παραγενομενος signifies *being made* an High-priest, it is what the apostle had affirmed before, viz. that Jesus has entered within the vail, γενομενος, *being made* an High-priest for ever, chap. vi. 20. and that he is a priest, ὁς γεγονεν, *who is made* after the power of an indissoluble life, chap. vii. 16. But whether in this place it signifies *being made*, or *being come*, I think, with PEIRCE, that it is to be joined in construction with *he entered in once into the holy place*, as in the next verse; and the sense is, either that Christ *being made* an High-priest, entered once into the holy place, or that *being come* to the holy place, he entered once as High-priest into it. The reader is left to his choice which to prefer, the scope being the same. The comparison here is between the Jewish High-priest's entering into the inner apartment of the tabernacle, ver. 7. and Christ's entering into heaven itself.

He is said to be an High-priest *of good things to come;* not because these good things are to be enjoyed only in a future state; but conformably to the Jewish manner of speaking of them while they were yet future, and to distinguish them from the temporal good things which the Israelites enjoyed in the land of Canaan by the Sinaitic covenant, and through the services of the Levitical priest-

hood, which were only a shadow of good things to come, chap. x. 1. The good things here mentioned comprehend all the spiritual and eternal blessings promised in the new covenant, of which Christ is mediator, and which result from his ministrations as High-priest. These good things he obtained for us

—*by a greater and more perfect tabernacle*—] That is διὰ, through the services of a greater and more perfect tabernacle than the Mosaic, or even those of the spacious and magnificent temple of Solomon. This more excellent temple wherein Christ ministers, is

—*not made with hands*,—] It is not of human workmanship, or fashioned by the hands of men, as both the tabernacle and the temple were;

—*that is to say, not of this building;*—] The original is, *not of this*, κτίσεως, *creation*. Not of the materials of this lower world, nor of the order of created things. Neither the tabernacle nor the temple were the true habitation of the Deity, (though he manifested the tokens of his special presence there) but were only temporary figures of it; for "the Most High dwelleth not in temples made "with hands," Acts vii. 48. Solomon was sensible of this, for he says "Behold the heaven, and heaven of "heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house "that I have builded," 1 Kings viii. 27. And the Lord himself, by his prophet says, "The heaven *is* my throne, "and the earth *is* my footstool: where *is* the house that "ye build unto me? and where *is* the place of my rest?" Isa. lxvi. 1.

But what is this *greater and more perfect tabernacle* in which Christ ministers? Many understand by it Christ's body, flesh, or human nature; because referring to his body, he calls it *this temple*, John ii. 19, 21.—because when his body was crucified and expired on the cross, the vail of the temple was rent in twain, Mat. xxvii. 51.—because the way of entrance into the holiest of all is through the vail, which is explained to be *his flesh*, Heb. x. 20.

—and, lastly, because he ministers as a priest in his human nature, in which all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily, Col. ii. 9. and may therefore be properly termed *a greater and more perfect tabernacle.* But none of these passages shew, that Christ's body or human nature is the tabernacle here meant; nor can it with any propriety be said, that Christ, as High-priest, entered once with his own blood into the tabernacle of his own body or human nature, or that he is the minister of his human nature, as he is said to be of the true tabernacle. We are plainly told that Christ is "an High-priest who is set on the right "hand of the Majesty in the heavens," Heb. viii. 1. This place therefore must be the sanctuary of which he is the minister, "and the true tabernacle which the Lord pitch-"ed and not man," ver. 2. and here must be the holy place into which he hath entered once as High-priest by his own blood, chap. ix. 12. So that if we want to know what that greater and more perfect tabernacle is, the apostle expressly informs us when he says, "Christ is not "entered into the holy places made with hands, but, εις "αυτον τον ουρανον, INTO HEAVEN ITSELF, now to appear in "the presence of God for us," ver. 24. It is clear therefore that the holy place into which Christ hath entered with his oblation, and of which he is the minister, is the highest heavens, where God displays his immediate and glorious presence, and which was typified by the holy of holies in the tabernacle and temple, and not by the body or nature of the high-priest. Now Christ being made an High-priest of good things to come, and which were to be procured not by the services of the earthly tabernacle, but through the services of a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, nor of this creation;

Ver. 12. *Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption* for us.] By goats and calves the apostle alludes to the animals with the blood of which the Jewish high-priest entered into the holy place

on the day of the yearly expiation. He was to bring a young bullock, (rendered by the LXX. μοσχος, *a calf*,) and, having killed it for a sin-offering, he was to enter with its blood within the vail, and sprinkle it on and before the mercy-seat, and thus make an atonement for himself and for his house, Lev. xvi. 3, 11, 14. He was also to take two goats for the people, present them before the Lord, cast lots upon them, and according as the lot fell, one of them was to be slain for a sin-offering, and its blood in like manner carried within the vail and sprinkled. The other goat was to be presented before the Lord to make an atonement with it; (for it was a sin-offering, though not slain, and it appears from ver. 5. that these two goats made but one sin-offering); then the priest, laying both his hands upon its head, was to confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, putting them upon the head of the goat, and sending it away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness, ver. 10, 21, 22. Thus, the sins of the whole nation were carried away from them. This ceremony of the live goat represented the transferring of guilt, or of the obligation to punishment, from the people to a substitute, as the killing of the other goat, carrying its blood within the vail and sprinkling it, represented the infliction of the punishment they deserved, upon the victim substituted in their place, which being accepted as an atonement for their sins, they were acquitted. This was a most striking prefiguration of the substitution and sacrifice of Christ, concerning whom it is said, "the Lord "laid on him the iniquities of us all—he bore the sins of "many," Isa. liii. 6, 12. "Who his own self bare our sins "in his own body on the tree," 1 Pet. ii. 24.—"he once "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust," chap. iii. 18. —"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," Gal. iii. 13. Such expressions prove, beyond all reasonable contradiction, that our sins were charged to his account for satisfaction, and that he suffered the punishment of them, not merely for our be-

nefit, but in our stead. This is what the type prefigured, and what the gospel constantly and plainly declares.

What the apostle says in this and the preceding verse is by way of contrast to the description he had given of the Mosaic tabernacle, and its priestly services. That was a worldly tabernacle made with hands; but this is a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not of this creation. The Jewish High-priest entered into the most holy place of the typical tabernacle, on the great day of expiation, by the blood of the calf, (or young bullock) and goat; but Christ entered into the most holy place of the true tabernacle by his own blood. The Jewish high-priest entered yearly into the former to repeat the same service; but Christ entered into the latter, εφαπαξ, once for all. Farther, the Jewish high-priest, by the legal sacrifices, obtained only a temporal pardon for the sins committed during the preceding year; but Christ, by his sacrifice, once offered, has obtained for us, αιωνιαν λυτρωσιν, eternal redemption, that is, an everlasting deliverance from the guilt and punishment of sin; consequently there can be no need for his offering himself a second time. See ver. 25.

In the following two verses the apostle argues from the efficacy of the legal sacrifices and purifications to obtain the ends of their appointment, that the blood of Christ must be much more effectual in obtaining the higher ends for which it was shed and offered.

Ver. 13. *For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh;*] In the foregoing verse he had mentioned *calves;* but in this and chap. x. 4. he terms them *bulls.* There are two words used in the Hebrew, *gnagel* and *par*, which the Jewish doctors distinguish thus: *gnagel*, they say, is a calf of the first year, and *par* a young bullock of the second year; now, as the calf and bullock were both males of the same species, differing only in age, and as the Jews never dismembered the males of their

cattle, as is commonly done with us, so they were both properly bulls; for no defective animals were to be offered in sacrifice to the Lord. See Lev. xxii. 19—26.

Besides the *blood of bulls and of goats*, the apostle mentions *the ashes of an heifer*. The ordinance of the heifer we find in Num. xix. It was to be a red heifer or young cow without blemish, upon which never yoke came. She was to be taken without the camp, slain in the presence of the priest, who was to sprinkle of her blood with his finger seven times before the tabernacle of the congregation: then she was to be burnt entire with all that pertained to her, and into the midst of the fire the priest was to throw cedar-wood, hyssop, and scarlet wool; and the whole being reduced to ashes, these were to be gathered up and kept for use; so that when persons were defiled (Gr. made common), by touching the dead, or by any other means, these ashes, being mixed with running water, were sprinkled upon them, and by this rite, they were cleansed from the external and ceremonial impurities of their flesh or body, and readmitted to the public worship and congregation of the Lord, from which their uncleanness had excluded them. This institution had something of the nature of a sin-offering; for it is said to be "a purification for sin," or, as the Hebrew expresses it, "it is sin," ver. 9.

Now, though the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, had no natural or intrinsic virtue in them, to sanctify or purify any thing, even outwardly, far less to cleanse internally from moral impurity; yet since, by virtue of divine appointment, these carnal ordinances so far sanctified as to purify the flesh or body from legal defilements, and fit the Israelites for approaching to God in his worship;

Ver. 14. *How much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*] What the apostle here affirms is

this, that the blood of Christ is much more effectual to cleanse the conscience from dead works, than the blood of bulls and goats, &c. was to purify the flesh or body from ceremonial defilements. This superior efficacy does not arise merely from appointment, for the blood of the legal sacrifice was also appointed of God: It must therefore arise chiefly from the superior nature and intrinsic fitness of the means. The legal sacrifices were mean brute animals, greatly inferior in nature to those for whom they were offered; and their blood had no moral influence to cleanse the conscience, nor so much as any natural virtue to purify the body, that being merely the effect of institution. But the blood of Christ is the blood of a person of infinite dignity and worth, as described chap. i. who assumed a pure and spotless human nature, that he might be a proper substitute for his people, and be capable of dying in their stead, as a sacrifice for their sins, chap. ii. 9—18. It is the blood of God's dear and only begotten Son, who, in obedience to his father's commandment, voluntarily laid down his life for the sheep, John x. 17, 18. It must therefore be infinitely precious in his Father's sight, and of sufficient worth and efficacy to satisfy his justice, and so to purify the conscience of believers.

It is said, that he offered himself to God *without spot*. It was a necessary qualification of all the legal sacrifices, that they should be without any bodily deformity, defect, or blemish of any kind, otherwise they could not be accepted on God's altar, Lev. xxii. 20—25. Mal. i. 8, 13, 14. This was only a figure of Christ's moral purity and spotless holiness of heart and life, for he knew no sin, chap. iv. 15. 2 Cor. v. 21. Hence his precious redeeming blood is likened to that of a lamb without blemish and without spot, 1 Pet. i. 19.

Farther, he thus offered himself *through the eternal Spirit*. A number of Greek MSS. and the Vulgate version, instead of *eternal Spirit*, read *holy Spirit;* but

most MSS. together with the ancient Syriac version, support the common reading. It is, perhaps, hard to determine which of them is the true reading, but either of them may bear a sound sense. Some explain it thus, that he through the Holy Spirit, by which he was sanctified from the womb, offered himself on the cross without spot to God: Others thus, That having been put to death in the flesh as a sacrifice, he, through the Spirit which quickened and raised him from the dead, (1 Pet. iii. 18.) entered as High-priest into the heavenly holy place, and there presented his sacrifice without fault to God. This agrees better with the scope of the preceding and following context, in which the apostle is comparing Christ's ministry in heaven with that of the Aaronical high-priest within the vail on the great day of atonement. See Chap. viii. 1—5. ix. 12, 24. But others by the eternal Spirit, understand Christ's divine nature. PEIRCE observes, "That the nature of our author's argument seems to lead "us to consider this *Spirit* as signifying the *Logos* or "divine nature of our Lord, since he is setting forth the "intrinsic worth and excellency of his offering." This sense I prefer, both for the reason given, and because his human nature, abstractly considered, however spotless and pure, does not sufficiently account for the efficacy ascribed to his sacrifice; but his human nature being personally united to his divine, must derive infinite worth from that union, and abundantly account for all the efficacy ascribed to his offering. Here it is said to *purify the conscience from dead works*, and that more effectually than the legal sacrifices and sprinklings could purify the flesh from ceremonial uncleanness.

Dead works are sins which deserve death according to the sentence of the law of God. See the same expression chap. vi. 1. The *conscience* is that judgment we form of our own conduct as good or evil, and by which we either justify or condemn ourselves accordingly. An *evil conscience* is an accusing conscience, by which a man is con-

demned of himself, John viii. 9. Tit. iii. 11. 1 John iii. 20. A *good conscience* is that which gives a favourable testimony to the godly sincerity and uprightness of a man's own conversation, Acts xxiii. 1. 2 Cor. i. 12. 1 Tim. i. 15, 19. Heb. xiii. 18. 1 Pet. iii. 16. But a *purified conscience*, of which the apostle here speaks, supposes its previous defilement with the guilt of dead works, and its purification from that is ascribed entirely to the blood of Christ; so that it must be a sacrificial purification by means of his making expiation or atonement for sin. And though it has not this effect upon the conscience till it is believed to be a sufficient ground of pardon and acceptance with God; yet still it is the blood of Christ, the object of belief, that produceth the effect; for nothing can warrantably satisfy a guilty conscience, but that which has fully satisfied the justice of God, and which he hath set forth to be a propitiation for a demonstration of his righteousness in the remission of sins, Rom. iii. 25, 26.

This purification of the conscience of sinners by the blood of Christ is necessary for fitting them *to serve the living God:* For till the heart is sprinkled from an evil conscience by the blood of Christ, till it is freed in some measure from the fear of wrath and reconciled to God, sinners are not possessed of that faith, love, holy confidence and freedom which are necessary to the acceptable service of him: And to expect access to, or acceptance in the service of a holy God on their own account, or on any account whatever, but through the oblation and intercession of Christ, must be the effect of self-confidence and presumption, the opposite of that reverence and godly fear with which the living God must be served, who has declared, "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh unto "me," Heb. xii. 28. Lev. x. 3.

The apostle having set forth the superior efficacy of the blood of Christ to that of the legal sacrifices, particularly in purifying the conscience for the service of God, he adds,

Ver. 15. *And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament*—] For this cause or reason that his blood is so efficacious, he is the mediator of the new covenant. As he is the sacrifice by whose blood that covenant is procured and ratified, it is highly proper that he should be the Mediator or High-priest of it, by and through whose ministration its blessings are dispensed. For the sense of the word *Mediator* as applied to Christ, see note on chap. viii. 6. The word διαθηκη, which, in this and the five following verses, is translated *testament,* I have rendered *covenant,* because the Hebrew *berith,* to which it answers, always signifies a covenant; because our translators ordinarily so render it; and because it is here connected with the blood of sacrifice, a priest and mediator, which things do not belong to a last will or testament, but only to a covenant. See note on chap. vii. 22. Now Christ is the Mediator of the new covenant, —*that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions* that were *under the first testament, they who are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.*] These words may be thus rendered: "That *his* death "(γενομενου) being accomplished for the redemption of the "transgressions (επι) against the first covenant, (οι κεκλημενοι) the called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

Though the death of Christ was not accomplished till the fulness of the time was come, Gal. iv. 4. or at the conclusion of the ages, Heb. ix. 26. yet it extends its efficacy backwards to the entrance of sin, and forward to the end of time, as the procuring cause of the remission of sins and eternal life. The faith of God's ancient people was directed forward to the coming of Christ by promises, types, and prophecies, both before and under the old covenant. That was the time of God's forbearance (δια την παρεσιν προγεγονοτων αμαρτηματων) in the passing by of the sins committed before an atonement was made for them, though in the foresight of it; for then his righte-

ousness or justice was not fully demonstrated till he set forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in his blood; and by this he has given full proof of his justice and faithfulness to his promise, not only in justifying all who shall henceforward believe in Jesus, but also all who from the beginning believed the promise and design of his coming, Rom. iii. 25, 26.

One end of Christ's death, we are told, was "for the "redemption," *i. e.* expiation, "of the transgressions "against the first covenant." By the *first covenant* he certainly means the covenant made at Sinai, for he afterwards shews that Moses dedicated it with blood, ver. 18. And this redemption of the transgressions against the first covenant was not merely to free from the punishment of them, but also that "the called might receive the pro-"mise of eternal inheritance, or rather the promised eter-"nal inheritance;" the promise being sometimes put for the thing promised. By *the called*, we are not to understand all who are the objects of the gospel call, which extends to all without exception who have access to hear it; for, in this sense, our Lord declares that "many are called "but few chosen," Mat. xxii. 14.; and this he illustrates in the preceding parable, where he also shews that some who to appearance comply with this call, will at last be rejected, ver. 11, 12, 13. But *the called* here signify true believers, who really comply with the call; and are described to be the called according to God's purpose, he having foreknown and predestinated them to be conformed to the image of his Son, and whom he also justifies and glorifies, Rom. viii. 28—31. That to which they are called is not merely the enjoyment of the outward privileges of God's professing people in this world, as some conceive; "but to the obtaining of "the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ," 2 Thess. ii. 14.—"to obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with "eternal glory," 2 Tim. ii. 10. See also 1 Thess. ii. 12. 1 Pet. v. 10. Accordingly, the apostle, in the passage

before us, represents the ultimate design of Christ's death to be, that "the called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance," that is, eternal life.

On this verse the learned Mr. PEIRCE says, "This "passage appeared to me very difficult, and well deserves "to be more exactly considered than I think it has yet "been; for I pretend not to speak with any great cer-"tainty of the interpretation I shall offer." His interpretation is, that the redemption of the transgressions against the first covenant has a particular respect to the Jews, but that the called who shall receive the promise of the eternal inheritance, include both Jews and Gentiles; but not being himself fully satisfied with this, he concludes with saying, "a better account of this verse will be very acceptable to me." But as from the redemption of Jewish transgressions we cannot infer, that Gentiles are included among the called, who receive the promise of eternal inheritance, so the connection between these two things remains yet unexplained.

The verse ascribes a twofold effect or end to Christ's death; first, it was "for the redemption or expiation of "the transgressions against the first covenant:" And, secondly, that "the called might receive the promise of "eternal inheritance." In other words, Christ by his death, hath procured for the called both the remission of their sins and eternal life, and the former in order to make way for the latter; for none can inherit eternal life till their transgressions are first expiated and pardoned: so that both parts of the verse respect the same persons, namely, the called; and therefore we cannot restrict the former part of it to the Jews, and extend the latter part to both Jews and Gentiles; for the whole verse makes but one sentence, so connected and constructed as not to admit of introducing any among the called but such as are redeemed from the transgressions against the first covenant. If this is admitted, then the only question that remains to be solved is this, Whether does the whole verse

respect the called both of Jews and Gentiles, or the called among the Jews only? Before giving a direct answer to this question, it may be proper to consider what may be said on both sides of it.

If this verse is to be explained by the current doctrine of the apostle in his epistles to the Gentile churches, where he constantly affirms that there is no difference between Jewish and Gentile believers in Christ, either as to their receiving the remission of sins or eternal life, Rom. x. 12, 13, Gal. iii. 28, 29. Eph. ii. 13—22, then the called here must be understood not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles, according to Rom. ix. 24. But then it may be asked, how the Gentiles came to be transgressors of the first or Sinaitic covenant, since they were never under it? In answer to this we may suppose that the apostle only means what is commonly called *the moral law*, which was originally written in the heart of man as the law of nature or creation, and is here called *the first covenant*, because it was explicitly published by the voice of God in that covenant, Exod. xx. 1—18. and also written with his own finger on two tables of stone, chap. xxxii. 15, 16. xxxiv. 1, 28.—1st, Because Moses frequently calls this law *the covenant*. The tables on which it was written he repeatedly terms *the tables of the covenant.*, Deut. ix. 9, 11, 15. The ten words or precepts written on them were *the words of the covenant*, Exod. xxxiv. 28. and they are expressly called "*his covenant*, which he commanded them to perform," Deut. iv. 13. Whatever was of a temporal or typical nature in that covenant was peculiar to the nation of Israel, and the rest of mankind were not bound by it; but all mankind are indispensably bound to obey the moral law, it being founded on their relation to God as their Creator, and to one another as possessing one common nature.—2d, Because it is by the transgressions of the moral law that the apostle proves both Jews and Gentiles to be all under sin, and that the whole world is become guilty before God, and so liable to punishment, Rom. iii.

But the Gentiles were not sinners, nor liable to punishment by transgressing the peculiar institutions of the first covenant to which they were never bound.—3d, Because Christ by his death hath redeemed Gentiles as well as Jews from the curse of the law: So the apostle says, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, be-" ing made a curse for us:—That the blessing of Abra-" ham might come on the Gentiles; that we might receive " the promise of the Spirit through faith," Gal. iii. 13, 14. The blessing of Abraham is that which God promised and confirmed to him in Christ long before the law was given at Sinai, ver. 17. viz. "In thee shall all nations be blessed," which is explained to be a promise, "that God would justify the heathen through faith," ver. 8. Now the law, from the curse of which the Gentiles were redeemed, must be the moral law contained in the ten commandments, and this, perhaps, is what the apostle means by the *first covenant;* and if so, the passage under consideration may include both Jews and Gentiles, who were equally transgressors of that law.

On the other side of the question it may be urged,—1st, That though Moses calls the decalogue or moral law *the covenant* and *the words of the covenant;* yet wherever this occurs the connection demonstrates he does not mean that it was a covenant made with the heathen, but only with the Israelites who are constantly distinguished from them, and whom God thus separated from all other nations of the earth, to be a peculiar people to himself, Exod. xix. 5, 6. And though all mankind were indispensably bound to observe the law of nature or creation; yet it was not formally and expressly delivered and committed to other nations in the form of a covenant made with them, as it was to the nation of Israel. Besides, there were a number of peculiar statutes, judgments, and ordinances belonging to that covenant which the Gentile nations were not bound to observe. In a word, God gave such singular manifestations of himself and of his will to

Israel, as he never did to any other people in the world. Of this Moses reminds them in the most striking language when exhorting them to obedience. See Deut. iv. 7, 8, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36; and the Psalmist says, "He sheweth "his words unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments "unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation; and "his judgments they have not known them." Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20.—2d, The apostle in this epistle to the Hebrews, terms the covenant made with their fathers *the first covenant*, in five places; yet in none of them does he restrict that term to the moral law or ten commandments; but evidently includes in it the whole of the Mosaic constitution, and that as distinguished from the *second* or *new covenant:* Nay, he calls the *first* the *old covenant*, which *decayeth*, and is ready to *vanish away*, Heb. viii. 13. which cannot be absolutely affirmed of the moral law, which is not made void, but established by the gospel, Rom. iii. 31. in which it is given in a more excellent manner, Heb. viii. 10.—3d, As he is writing to the Hebrews, and mentions the transgressions of the first covenant, he must have had the Jews particularly in view who had been under that covenant, and had still too much dependance on, and attachment to its institutions. To bring them off from these things, and attach them more firmly to Christ, he, in the 15th verse, and the preceding context, shews them, that it was not by the priesthood, sacrifices, and bodily purifications of the first covenant that either they, or any of the called of their nation, ever obtained the pardon of their transgressions under that covenant, or a title to the eternal inheritance, but solely by the death or sacrifice of Christ, the Mediator of the new covenant.

This I take to be the sense of the passage, and it certainly agrees with the main scope of the epistle, as well as with the promise of the new covenant in Jer. xxxi. 31. which had the beginning of its accomplishment among the Jews, as Peter declares, "Unto you first, God having "raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turn-

"ing away every one of you from his iniquities," Acts iii. 26. But though the promises were addressed to the Jews, and applied to them in the first instance, (and there is ground to hope will be more fully accomplished to them in the latter days, Rom. xi. 25, 33.); yet it was without any prejudice to the Gentiles, who are included in the promise made to Abraham, Gen. xii. 3. xxii. 18. and who by faith in Christ became the children of God and Abraham's seed, and so fellow-heirs with them, and of the same body and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel, Gal. iii. 26, 29. Eph. iii. 6. This the apostle abundantly shews in his epistles to the Gentile churches, but never expressly mentions the Gentiles in this epistle.

The apostle having mentioned the death of Christ as Mediator of the new covenant with the design of it, he proceeds to shew the necessity of his death, particularly with respect to the ratification of that covenant.

Ver. 16. *For where a testament* is, *there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.*] If in all the word of God διαθηκη ever signifies a *testament* or *last will*, it must be in this passage, where it is connected with διαθεμενος, which is translated *testator*. But though these two words in other Greek authors frequently signify a testament and testator, as our translators have here rendered them; yet it may be justly questioned if ever they have that signification in the sacred writings. I have formerly shewn (see note on chap. vii. 22.) that the Hebrew *berith* invariably signifies a *covenant*, and that the LXX. always render it διαθηκη; accordingly, our English translators have constantly rendered it *covenant* throughout the Old Testament, and in most places where it occurs in the New: But in this and some other places they have changed the term into *testament*, and that even in some citations from the Old Testament, where they had formerly used the word *covenant*. Some are of opinion, that the new covenant has also the nature of a testament, because its blessings are all procured and ratified by the death of Christ,

and most freely bestowed; and that therefore διαθηκη may be rendered either *testament* or *covenant* as translators choose: just as they have rendered the word μαρτυρια by the words *record*, *witness*, and *testimony*. But the case is different; for these three words convey the same idea, but *testament* and *covenant* do not. And though they may be compared in certain circumstances, such as their ratification by death; yet even in that they do not exactly agree; for there is a difference between the natural death of a testator, and the violent death of a victim, or sacrifice, by which covenants were anciently made and ratified, and especially such covenants as were between God and sinful men, in which the death and blood of sacrifices were necessary as well for expiation and atonement, as for ratification. See Gen. viii. 20, 21. ix. 8—12. Exod. xxiv. 3—9. Psalm l. 5. Zech. ix. 11.

Farther, the scope of the apostle's reasoning in the context does not seem to agree with the idea of a testament and testator. In ver. 14. he sets forth the superior efficacy of Christ's blood to that of the legal sacrifices. In ver. 15. he shews, that for this cause he is the Mediator of the new covenant, that his death being accomplished for the redemption, or expiation, of the transgressions of the first covenant, the called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. Then he begins this 16th verse with the connecting word *for*, which shews that he is giving an additional reason for the death of Christ, namely, that it was necessary for ratifying the covenant: So that if in ver. 16, 17. he refers to a testator's ratifying his last will by his death, it can be only in the way of comparison, to illustrate the point of ratification, as I have observed in the paraphrase, for he does not affirm that the new covenant is a testament, or that Christ is a testator; and it was below the dignity of the inspired apostle to play upon the ambiguity of words. It is plain, however, that what he says in the context will not apply to a proper testament; for a testament did not require a mediator, nor was it ratified

by the blood of sacrifice, nor was the death of the testator for the redemption or expiation of transgressions. These things belonged to a covenant, not to a testament. Christ then is not the Mediator of a testament, as our translators have represented him, any more than he is the testator of a covenant.

PEIRCE, MACKNIGHT, and several others, have given it as their opinion, that even in ver. 16, 17. the apostle does not refer either to a testament or testator, but to the ancient manner of making and confirming covenants by the death and blood of sacrifice. We have seen that διαθηκη signifies a *covenant*, but the chief difficulty here, rests on the word διαθεμενος, which in other authors frequently signifies a *testator*, as our version has it. In the versions of DODDRIDGE, WESLEY, WAKEFIELD, it is expressed by a periphrasis, and rendered "that by which it is confirmed," or "that which establisheth," viz. the covenant: but if a single term can be found to express the sense of the original word, it is certainly preferable. PEIRCE renders it *pacifier;* but produces only one authority for this sense, and that neither from the New Testament nor the LXX. but from APPIAN. MACKNIGHT, I think, is more satisfactory, who translates τȣ διαθεμενȣ *of the appointed*, and supplies either the word θυμαλος, *sacrifice*, or ζωȣ, *animal*, which might be a goat, bull, or calf. He observes that διαθεμενȣ is the participle of the second aorist of the middle voice of the verb διαιθημι, *I appoint;* and therefore its primary and literal signification is, *of the appointed*, a sense which our translators have given it, Luke xxii. 29. "And I (διατιθεμαι) appoint unto you a kingdom, as my "Father (διατιθετο) hath appointed unto me." It may be objected, that there was not (αναγκη) *a necessity* that all covenants should be ratified by the death of sacrifice; whereas the death of the testator was always held necessary to ratify his testament. In answer to this it may be observed, that it was usual among the ancients, both Jews and Gentiles, to ratify solemn covenants or engagements

by the death of sacrifice, which it is likely originated in divine appointment; and we are sure that it was *necessary* that the two covenants, of which alone the apostle is speaking, should be so ratified. If the intelligent reader is not satisfied with the sense I have given of this and the succeeding verse in the paraphrase, he may, after considering what has been said, perhaps prefer the following translation, "for where a covenant *is, there is* a necessity that the "death (τȣ διαθεμενȣ) of the appointed *sacrifice* (φερισθαι) "be brought in," or produced. The next verse gives the reason of this necessity, namely, to make the covenant firm or give it validity.

Ver. 17. *For a testament* is *of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all whilst the testator liveth.*] So our translators have rendered this verse, agreeably to their translation of διαθηκη and διαθεμενος in the former; but besides that these two words will bear another sense, as has been shewn, the original has not been very strictly followed in other parts of this verse. They have rendered επι νεκροις *after men are dead.* WESLEY renders it, *after he is dead,* though νεκροις is plural; but in his note he says, "Neither this, nor *after men are dead,* is "a literal translation of the words;" and concludes, "it "is a very perplexed passage." But επι νεκροις may be literally rendered *upon,* or *over dead,* viz. sacrifices, which supplement is expressed, Psal. l. 5. "those who have made "a covenant with me (επι θυσιας) over sacrifices." The verse therefore may be thus translated, "For a covenant is "firm over dead *sacrifices,* otherwise it never hath force "whilst the appointed *sacrifice liveth.*" This sense of the verse is strongly supported by its close connection with the following verses, where he shews that it was by the blood of sacrifice that the first covenant was made or dedicated.

Ver. 18. *Whereupon neither the first* testament *was dedicated without blood.*] Literally, "Hence neither "the first without blood was dedicated." Though the

substantive is here omitted, as it is in chap. viii. 7, 13, ix. 1. yet it is evident from the following two verses, that by *the first* is meant the transaction at Sinai, and that the supplement ought to be *covenant*, as our translators have uniformly termed it throughout the Old Testament; yet here, and in the context, they have called the same thing a *testament*, though there was nothing of the nature of a testament in all that transaction: And as to the manner of its ratification, was it ever known to be the practice of any people, in confirming a testament or last will, to slay the testator and sprinkle *his blood on* the legatees, as was done with the blood of sacrifice in that transaction?

The word εγκεκαινιςαι, which denotes something *made new*, or *newly made*, our translators, according to the Vulgate, have rendered *was dedicated*. In the margin they have it *purified*, and in chap. x. 20. *consecrated*. Perhaps none of these senses are altogether alien from the apostle's design; for when God entered into covenant with a sinful people, it was necessary that they should be *purified* from guilt, *reconciled* to him, and *dedicated* or *consecrated* to his service as a holy and peculiar people; and all this by means of atoning blood, without which there can be no friendly relation or correspondence between God and them: But as the apostle is here speaking of the covenant itself, and as this verse contains the proof of what he had said in the foregoing respecting its being made (βεβιαν) *firm*, or *of force* by death, I apprehend that by εγκεκαινιςαι he means *was ratified* or *confirmed*, as the Syriac renders it. The manner of making and ratifying that covenant he describes as follows:

Ver. 19. *For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people.*]—The apostle here refers to Exod. xxiv. 3, 7, 8. where Moses gives an account of what took place on that solemn occasion: He first of all recited to the people all the words

of the Lord, and all the judgments, which are recorded in the four foregoing chapters; and when the people agreed to them, and promised obedience, ver. 3. he wrote all the words of the Lord in a book, rose up early in the morning, builded an altar under the hill, and erected twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel, ver. 4. Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt-offerings and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the Lord, ver. 5. Half of the blood he put into basons, and the other half he sprinkled on the altar, ver. 6. He then took the book of the covenant, in which he had written all the words of the Lord, and read it in the audience of the people, to which they again gave their consent and promised obedience, ver. 7. Upon this agreement he proceeds immediately to dedicate or ratify the covenant between the Lord and the people, by sprinkling the blood of the slain sacrifices, ver. 8.

This concluding action was what the apostle had chiefly in view as the proof of what he had said, ver. 18. and therefore he mentions only one of the preceding particulars, namely, that it was performed, "when Moses had "spoken every precept to all the people, according to the law," (see Exod. xxiv. 3, 7.) that is, after he had proposed the terms of God's covenant to them, and obtained their consent, "he took the blood of calves, and "of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, "and sprinkled both the book and all the people." The apostle here does not strictly follow either the Hebrew or the LXX. for he mentions some things which are not expressed in the Mosaic account, though they appear to be be implied in it. In Exod. xxiv. 8. it is only said, that "Moses took the blood, and sprinkled "it on the people;" but here we are told that it was the blood of *calves and of goats with water*, and that the instrument used in sprinkling it was *scarlet wool and*

hyssop, none of which things are, on this occasion, expressly mentioned by Moses.

To solve this difficulty, some have thought that the apostle does not here confine himself to what was done on that particular occasion; but takes in various things which suited his purpose from other parts of the law relative to the sprinkling of the blood of sacrifices on other occasions. But though it is true that he immediately after speaks of the universal use of sacrificial blood under the law for purification and remission (ver. 21, 22.) yet it is by way of addition to what he here says of the dedication of the covenant. The Mosaic account sufficiently proves what the apostle had asserted, viz. that the first covenant was not dedicated without blood, ver. 18. but as to the *kind* of animals slain, and the *manner* of sprinkling their blood, these things do not seem so absolutely necessary to his purpose as to require his mentioning them, had he not been fully assured that they were actually used in that solemn transaction. Others suppose, that the apostle might learn these particulars, as well as some other things he mentions, from the received traditions and interpretations of the Jews. But it is not likely that our apostle would incorporate any thing into the very text of the Mosaic law, upon the bare authority of a Jewish tradition or interpretation.

The apostle had sufficient authority for all the particulars which he here mentions, both from what is expressly said in the passage to which he refers, and from the prescriptions of the law itself as to the manner of performing similar rituals. It is expressly said, Exod. xxiv. 5. that "they offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offer-" ings of oxen unto the Lord." For *oxen* the LXX. have μοσκαρια, *calves*, which sense the Hebrew word will also bear. (See note on ver. 12, 13.) As to *goats*, they were frequently used in the sin-offerings and annual atonements, Lev. xvi. 15, 27. and it has been observed, that wherever

burnt-offerings and peace-offerings are mentioned together, as being offered for the people as here, goats or kids were always a part of the burnt offering. *Water* was one of the prescribed means of purification even by itself, and when mixed with the blood, kept it in a fluid state fit for sprinkling. The *scarlet wool* and *hyssop* were used as the instrument of sprinkling, Exod. xii. 22. Lev. xiv. 51, 52.; and though on some occasions the priest sprinkled it with his finger; yet when such a large quantity of blood was used, and so many were to be sprinkled with it as on this occasion, the wool and hyssop formed a convenient instrument for that purpose. The apostle does not mention the sprinkling of the altar, Exod. xxiv. 6. but he mentions the sprinkling of the *book*, which, I think, must be the book that Moses wrote and read in the audience of the people, ver. 4, 7. and which it is likely was laid on the altar and sprinkled with it. In the fore-cited passage we are simply told, that "Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people," ver. 8.; but our apostle says, he sprinkled it on (πανλα) *all* the people. This I think is more likely than that he should have sprinkled it only on the twelve pillars, or on the seventy elders, or on those of the people who happened to be nearest him, as some conceive, for as the covenant was made with all the people, so all of them must have been intended in that sprinkling. PEIRCE observes on this verse, that "'Tis not likely when God was "so punctual in his prescriptions of the old ceremonial "service, that he would fail to give Moses a particular "direction in so necessary a case, or that Moses would "venture to act without it. And if this be allowed, "what can we look upon as a more reasonable supposi-"tion, than that God now prescribed to Moses the same "method which he did afterwards expressly in like "cases." To which we may add, that as the inspiration of the apostle must be admitted, there can no doubt but that all the particulars mentioned by him were pre-

scribed by God, and punctually observed on that remarkable occasion, though some of them are not expressly mentioned in the Mosaic account.

While Moses was thus sprinkling the book, and all the people with the blood of the slain animals, he explained the meaning and design of that action in the following words:

Ver. 20. *Saying, This* is *the blood of the testament* (covenant) *which God hath enjoined unto you.*] In the Hebrew it is, "Behold the blood of the covenant which "Jehovah hath struck (or cut) with you concerning all these words:" namely, the words which he had written in the book of the covenant, and had read in their audience, and to which they had given their consent, ver. 7. Our apostle does not strictly follow either the Hebrew or the LXX. but the difference is only verbal, not in the sense. Some explain the apostle's words, "This is the blood of the covenant which God hath en-"joined you to obey." Others, "This is the blood "whereby the covenant which God commanded me to "make with you is ratified;" But the words, "enjoined "unto you," evidently respect the people, between whom and God, Moses acted as Mediator on that occasion. The sprinkling of the blood of the slain sacrifices on the book and on the people, was that by which the covenant between God and them, which was written in the book and agreed to, was solemnly ratified and confirmed.

It deserves particular notice, that the words of Moses in sprinkling the blood are alluded to by our Lord, when he instituted the sacred Supper to keep up the memory of his death as a sacrifice; for in delivering the cup he says, "This is my blood of the new covenant, which is "shed for many for the remission of sins," Mat. xxvi. 28. see also 1 Cor. xi. 25. which shews that the new covenant was ratified by his blood, even as the first covenant was by the blood of the legal sacrifices. But herein lies the

difference; the blood of those sacrifices ratified only a temporal covenant; but the blood of Christ is, "the "blood of the everlasting covenant," Heb. xiii. 20. The former could not really take away sin, chap. x. 4. but Christ's blood was shed "for the remission of sins," and it is on that account that the promise of the new covenant is accomplished, "Their sins and their iniquities will I "remember no more," ver. 17. And alluding to the same thing, the blood of Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant is termed "the blood of sprinkling," chap. xii. 24.

The apostle having shewn that the Sinaitic covenant was at first made and ratified with the blood of slain sacrifices, he proceeds to mention other instances, both stated and occasional, in which the sprinkling of blood was used for purification and atonement.

Ver. 21. *Moreover, he sprinkled likewise with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry.*] As the covenant itself was dedicated and ratified with blood; so the tabernacle and all the implements and means of solemn worship and correspondence with God were in like manner sprinkled and purified with the same. The tabernacle was not erected, nor its utensils made till some time after the covenant was ratified; and some think that the sprinkling here referred to was at the first erection and consecration of the tabernacle and its vessels; for though, in the order given for consecrating them, nothing is mentioned but the anointing oil, Exod. xl. 9, 10. yet we find that the altar at its consecration was sanctified with blood, Lev. viii. 15. so that it is likely the rest of the utensils were purified in like manner. JOSEPHUS, who was himself a priest, says, "The taber-"nacle and the vessels thereto belonging, were con-"secrated both with oil, and with the blood of bulls and "of rams." Antiq. Lib. iii. c. 8.

But we are under no necessity to understand the apostle here as referring to the sprinkling of the tabernacle

and its vessels at their first dedication, as this was a service which the high-priest had statedly to perform every year on the day of expiation, Lev. xvi. 16—20. and it appears from what follows to the end of the chapter, that the apostle's chief design was to run the comparison between the services of the high-priest in the sanctuary on that day, and the exercise of Christ's priestly office in heaven. And though Moses did not personally sprinkle the blood on the tabernacle and its vessels on the anniversary day of atonement; yet it may be spoken of as his doing, because the high-priest acted in it according to divine appointment in the law delivered by Moses; for Moses often signifies his law, see Luke xvi. 29, 31. xxiv. 27. Acts xv. 21. 2 Cor. iii. 15. So that the apostle having shewn, that the covenant was at first dedicated or ratified with blood, he here goes on to shew the continued use of blood for purification and atonement throughout the whole administration of it, and in all the people's worship and intercourse with God.

Ver. 22. *And almost all things are by the law purged with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.*] The apostle says, *almost all things*, intimating that there were a few exceptions; for some things were purified with fire, others with water, and others with water mixed with the ashes of the red heifer, Num. xxxi. 23, xix. 2—10. But the things that were more peculiarly appropriated to the worship of God were all purified with blood according to the law.

Cleansing with blood was used on various occasions; but it was on the tenth day of the seventh month that an universal national cleansing was made, both of the people and of the tabernacle and its vessels.

With respect to the people it is said, "on that day "shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse "you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the "Lord," Lev. xvi. 30. Now, though these yearly atonements by the blood of bulls and of goats, could not

cleanse the conscience or put away sin, ver. 9. ch. x. 4.; though they had no intrinsic worth or efficacy in them to procure real pardon of moral guilt, or to free from the punishment of the life to come; yet, by divine appointment, they sanctified to the purifying of the flesh or body from ceremonial defilements which precluded them from the tabernacle worship, and freed them from the temporal civil penalties which they had incurred by transgressing the laws of the state, and which God, as their political Sovereign, would have inflicted on them, unless these atonements had been made for them year by year continually, chap. x. 1.

As for the tabernacle and its vessels, including the most holy place where the divine presence resided, these were also purified with the blood of sacrifices, for so the law expressly required, "He shall make an atonement "for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the "children of Israel, and because of their transgressions "in all their sins; and so shall he do for the tabernacle "of the congregation that remaineth among them in the "midst of their uncleanness," Lev. xvi. 16. This was performed in the following manner: The high-priest carried the blood of the appointed sacrifices within the vail into the most holy place, and sprinkled it with his finger seven times on the mercy-seat, and seven times before it; and in like manner he sprinkled the outer apartment, or tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, Lev. xvi. 14, 20. As these things were incapable of moral pollution, their uncleanness must have been of a ceremonial kind, contracted as is expressed, "by their remaining "among the people in the midst of their uncleanness;" so that it was derived from the people, and the services performed in them by the priests on their account during the preceding year. By the cleansing and reconciling of these things, they were fitted anew to be used in the worship of God, and the tabernacles were opened to the prayers and other acts of religious worship to be per-

formed by the priests and people during the year following. Now, as the people and the holy places were all cleansed from time to time with blood; and as without shedding of blood, there was not even a temporal remission granted by the law, nor access to God in his worship; this was well calculated to give the Israelites a deep impression of the holiness of God, of his irreconcileable opposition to sin, and of the claims of his justice upon the sinner; while at the same time it had a shadow of good things to come, by admitting the death of a substitute for the guilty, and so prefiguring the sacrifice of Christ, which at once and for ever was to take away the sins of the true Israel, to procure for them access to and acceptance with God in their services here, and to open heaven for their reception hereafter.

Ver. 23. It was *therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these;*—] The tabernacle with its apartments and utensils, are called the (ὑποδειγμαῖα) "patterns of things in the heavens;" that is, the *representations* or *resemblances* of them; for they were not the original patterns according to which the heavenly things were made; on the contrary, Moses was admonished of God to make all things according to the heavenly pattern which was shewn to him in the mount; so they were but copies and shadows of heavenly things, chap. viii. 5.

The apostle infers that it was *necessary* that these things should be purified with the blood of the legal sacrifices. This necessity, I apprehend, must be owing to the appointment of God, both as to their first consecration to a holy use, and to the continuance of that use by a yearly renewed purification, without which they would become unfit to answer the design of their appointment as resemblances of things in the heavens. It was therefore necessary that the typical representations of things in the heavens should be purified with these sacrifices;

—*but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices*

than these.] Various explanations are given of "the hea-
"venly things themselves." WESLEY says, "they signify
"our heaven-born spirits: what more they may mean we
"know not yet." Several ancient commentators explain them of the church under the gospel. Others, that they might be sure not to miss the mark, include in them, "all
"the effects of the counsel of God in Christ, in the re-
"demption, worship, glory, and eternal salvation of the
"church: Christ himself, in all his offices; all the spiri-
"tual benefits and eternal effects of his redemption on the
"souls of men, with all the worship of God in him in the
"gospel." But it is evident that (αυλα τα επουρανια) "the
"heavenly things themselves," are the things which were represented by the Mosaic tabernacle and what pertained to it: For that tabernacle which had the emblems of the divine presence, and all the vessels of the ministry in it, and in which the priestly services were performed, is termed, "the example and shadow of heavenly things," chap. viii. 5.—"the patterns of things in the heavens," chap. ix. 23.—"the holy places made with hands, which
"are the figures of the true," ver. 24. therefore "the
"heavenly things themselves," which answer to these figures and shadows as their truth and substance, must be the heavenly "holy places and true tabernacle" of which Christ is the minister, and "which the Lord pitched, and
"not man," chap. viii. 2. This is that "greater and more
"perfect tabernacle, not made with hands," like the former, chap. ix. 11. It is the true holy place, into which Christ hath entered as High-priest, now to appear in the presence of God for us, and is expressly declared to be (αυλον τον ουρανον) *heaven itself*, ver. 24.

But it may be asked, What need had the heavenly things or holy places themselves of being purified, since they never had any impurity in their nature, nor were defiled by other things, as no unclean thing can enter there? In answer to this let it be considered,—1st. That though the typical representations of heavenly things had no moral

impurity in themselves, and though neither person nor thing ceremonially unclean was permitted to enter into the outer, far less into the inner tabernacle, to defile it; yet we have seen that it was *necessary* that they should be purified with blood on account of the uncleanness of the people, and that they might thus be opened and fitted for their admission to and acceptance with God and his worship. Now, as to the heavenly things, it may be observed, that though Christ himself had no sin of his own, yet, as the substitute of sinners, he *sanctified* and devoted himself to be a sacrifice for their sins, John xvii. 19. and by the blood of his sacrifice he was fitted as their High-priest to enter with his oblation into the holiest of all, being thus *made perfect* or *consecrated* through his sufferings, and furnished with something to offer there on their account, Heb. ii. 10. v. 8, 9. vii. 28. viii. 3.—2d. By his entering into heaven with the blood of his own sacrifice he hath (ενεκαινισεν) *dedicated* and opened for all believers a new-made and living way of access into the holiest, by which they may draw near in their spiritual worship with boldness, and the full assured faith of acceptance through his mediation, having their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience by his blood, Eph. iii. 12. Heb. iv. 16. x. 10—23. —3d. Lastly, he hath gone into heaven (ετοιμασαι) to *prepare* a place for the everlasting habitation of the saints, and will come again to receive them to himself, that where he is there they may be also, John xiv. 2, 3. So that the purification of the heavenly things was necessary on account of the uncleanness of the people, and signifies to fit, prepare, and render them accessible to them in their worship, and in all their intercourse with a holy God.

This was done by *better sacrifices* than those appointed by the law, whose efficacy did not extend to heavenly things. By *better sacrifices*, the apostle intends the sacrifice of Christ, which was but one, and only once offered, as he clearly shews, ver. 25, 26, 27. x. 12, 14, 18. but here he uses the plural, to give dignity to it, as effectually

answering all the substantial ends of sacrifice, in procuring the everlasting pardon of sin, access to the throne of grace while here, and to the enjoyment of eternal life hereafter; and which all the sacrifices of the law could not procure, however numerous and often repeated. But this better sacrifice was not presented and offered in the earthly tabernacle;

Ver. 24. *For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands,* which are *the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:*] It was the distinguished honour of the high-priest under the law, and that in which his peculiar ministry chiefly consisted, to enter yearly with the blood of atonement into the holy places of the tabernacle or temple, and particularly into the most holy places, where the divine throne and presence resided, which notwithstanding were but holy places made with hands, or of human workmanship, and only figures of the true or heavenly holy places, and of their services. The word rendered *figures* is αντιτυπα, *antitypes,* a word which we commonly apply to the things which the figures signified; but here it means the very opposite, namely, the figures or types themselves, and which he had just before termed τα υποδειγματα, *the examples,* or resemblances of things in the heavens, ver. 23.

Now Christ, as our great High-priest, hath not entered with his oblation into the holy places made with hands, which were only typical resemblances of the true holy places; "but into heaven itself," that is, into the highest heavens, the place of the peculiar residence of the Divine Majesty; and so he is said to have "passed through the "heavens," chap. iv. 14. and to have "ascended up far "above all heavens," Eph. iv. 10. The typical sacrifices on the day of expiation were slain without, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, Lev. xvi. 7. but the offering and sprinkling of their blood was performed by the high-priest, when he entered with it within the vail, which was properly making the atonement, and applying

it to the actual purification of the patterns of heavenly things: So Christ's sacrifice was slain and his blood shed on earth when he expired on the cross, bearing our sins in his own body on the tree. But, in order to compleat the atonement, it was necessary that he should, as High-priest, enter within the vail into heaven itself, with the blood of his sacrifice, to present and offer it there as an expiation before the throne of the Divine Majesty; and there he now continues to appear in the immediate presence of God, making intercession with him for us on the ground of his meritorious and efficacious oblation.

Ver. 25. *Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high-priest entereth into the holy place every year with the blood of others;*] The sense of this verse, and its connection with the preceding, seem to stand thus, "Christ has not entered into the holy places made with "hands—ουδε, neither has he entered into heaven itself "that he might offer himself often there, as the legal high-"priest entereth into the holy places of the tabernacle "every year, with other blood than his own, namely, that "of slain animals."

Here there is a striking contrast stated between the ministry of the Aaronical high-priests in the typical holy places, and that of Christ our great High-priest in heaven. They entered into the holy places made with hands, but he into heaven itself. They entered into the former with the blood of slain animals, but he into the latter with his own blood. They had to withdraw immediately after they had accomplished the service of atonement; but he continues there now to appear in the presence of God for us. They had to repeat this service yearly; but Christ having made a complete expiation of sin by his one offering, and obtained eternal redemption for us, has left no room for any farther offering for sin. Christ had therefore no occasion to enter frequently into the heavenly sanctuary, as he abides there continually; nor to offer himself often there, as the Jewish high-priest entereth yearly into the holy

places of the earthly tabernacle, to offer there the blood of bulls and of goats.

Ver. 26. (*For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world;*)—] As the blood which he offered in heaven was his own blood, which was shed when he suffered and died on the cross, and as his death was essential to his offering, and necessary to his having something to offer there, chap. viii. 3. so, upon supposition that it had been necessary that he should have offered himself often, or yearly, he must in that case have often suffered death since the foundation of the world: That is, since ever sin entered into the world, which was very soon after the world was created. In this limited sense the phrase is used in Luke xi. 50. But in opposition to his often suffering and offering himself since the foundation of the world, the apostle says,

—*but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*] The words are not συντελεια τȣ αιωνος in the singular, which frequently signify *the end of the world*, or the time of Christ's second coming, as in Mat. xiii. 39, 40, 49. xxviii. 20. but they are συντελεια των αιωνων, in the plural, and refer to a very different period, namely, the time of Christ's first coming, as the words following evidently declare. From the time that sin entered into the world, and expiation by sacrifice became necessary, several ages had elapsed before Christ came the first time, such as the antediluvian, the patriarchal, and the age of the law, now near its close, and which was the fulness of the time appointed for his first coming, Mark i. 15. Gal. iv. 4. The words therefore should be rendered, *in the end*, or at the conclusion or completion *of the ages;* and so they are to be understood in 1 Cor. x. 11. The end for which he then appeared, or was manifested, was "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." That is, to make a complete and effectual atonement for sin at once, by his own sacrifice, and so, αθετησιν, to abolish all farther offering for sin.

MACKNIGHT justly observes here, that this reasoning of the apostle "supposeth two facts which are of great im-"portance. The first is, that from the fall of Adam to the "end of the world, no man will be pardoned but through "Christ's having offered himself to God a sacrifice for sin. "The apostle's reasoning evidently implies this. For if "sinners may be pardoned without Christ's offering him-"self a sacrifice, his offering himself so much as once "would not have been necessary, and far less his offering "himself often, as the apostle affirms.—The second fact "implied in the apostle's reasoning is, That although "Christ offered himself only once, and that at the conclu-"sion of the Mosaic dispensation, that one offering is in "itself so meritorious, and of such efficacy in procuring "pardon for the penitent, that its influence reacheth back-"wards to the beginning of the world, and forwards to "the end of time."

The apostle insists much upon Christ's having offered himself but *once* or *once for all*, in order to set forth the infinite worth and efficacy of his sacrifice, as having fully satisfied Divine justice, and procured eternal redemption for us; consequently rendered all farther offering for sin entirely useless. This is what he has chiefly in view in the two succeeding verses, and also in the first part of the following chapter.

Ver. 27. *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment;*] He does not say, appointed to *all* men without exception once to die; because Enoch and Elijah were translated to heaven in their bodies without dying, and those who are alive and remain on the earth at the second coming of Christ shall not die but be changed, 1 Cor. xv. 51. 1 Thess. iv. 15, 17. But the apostle here speaks according to the ordinary and general course of things. The appointment of men once to die is the sentence of God pronounced upon Adam's first transgression, viz. "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou "return," Gen. iii. 19. This sentence affects all his pos-

terity, For "by one man sin entered into the world, and "death by sin; and so death passed through *him* unto "all men, in whom all have sinned," Rom. v. 12. Death here, strictly speaking, is not *spiritual death* in trespasses and sins; for it is the death which God appointed and inflicted on mankind as the punishment of Adam's one offence: Nor is it the *second death;* for that is the punishment of men's personal deeds done in the body, and *succeeds* the judgment: Rev. xx. 14. xxi. 8. whereas this is a dying but *once*, the judgment is after it. It must therefore be that death which is so clearly expressed in the sentence, viz. man's returning to the dust from whence he was taken.

But this death does not put an end to men's existence; for as surely as they die once, so surely shall the judgment take place after this. They shall all be raised from the dead, and "appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, "that every one may receive the things *done* in his body, "according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or "evil." John v. 28, 29. 1 Cor. v. 10.; for then they shall all receive their final sentence of everlasting happiness or misery, Matt. xxv. 31—46.

Now as it is appointed unto men first to die *once*, and their bodies to return to dust;

Ver. 28. *So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many* :—] The comparison here is between men's dying *once*, and Christ's being *once* offered, as opposed to the repetition of the legal sacrifices. All mankind became mortal, and were appointed to die once, not for their own personal sins, but on account of the one offence of the first man, their common father and representative: For "by "one man's disobedience many were made sinners," having the guilt of his sin so imputed to them, as to fall under the sentence of death denounced upon it, Rom. v. 18, 19. "So Christ was once offered," not for any sin of his own, for he knew no sin, but as the substitute of sinners, "to "bear the sins of many." To *bear sin* is to suffer the

punishment of it, Ezek. xviii. 19, 20. In this sense Christ was made sin for us, and suffered the just for the unjust: The Lord having laid on him the iniquities of us all, he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities; he poured out his soul unto death, and thus "bare "the sin of many," Isa. liii. 5, 6, 11, 12. or, as Peter expresses it, "who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree," 1 Pet. ii. 24. Now his being once offered to bear the sins of many, has not only procured for them a restoration from the first death which comes by Adam's *one offence*, and the pardon of their own *many offences*, by which they had become liable to the pains of the second death; but has also procured for them a title to reign in eternal life, Rom. v. 16, 17. And so he adds,

—*and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*] The apostle mentions two personal appearances of Christ. The first was when he appeared once in the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, ver. 26. It was then he assumed the form of a servant, was made in the likeness of man, and found in fashion as a man; a man in a low and afflicted condition, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: This was the humble appearance he made, and which was answerable to the gracious errand on which he came. But when he comes the second time, O how different will his appearance then be! He will then *appear without sin*, that is, he does not come to suffer and die a second time as a sacrifice for sin, nor yet to enter again as High-priest into the heavenly holy place to present his oblation afresh: But he will then appear visibly in his glory coming from heaven, and all the holy angels in his train, and shall sit on the throne of his glory, in all the power, splendour, and majesty of the Judge of quick and dead of all ages and nations, who shall be gathered before him to receive their final sentence, Matt. xxv. 31, 32. Rev. xx. 11, 12, 13. This will be a terrible appearance to the

wicked, (for every eye shall see him, Rev. i. 7.); but a most joyful appearance *unto them that look for him*, or, απεκδεχομενοις, that expect or wait for him; that is, to his faithful servants, who believe the promise of his coming, and are described as waiting for God's Son from heaven, and as earnestly desiring and loving his appearing, 1 Thess. i. 10. 2 Tim. iv. 8. Tit. ii. 13. and so are diligent that they may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless, 2 Pet. iii. 14. Therefore as Christ appeared the first time to make an atonement for their sins by the sacrifice of himself; so he will appear the second time "unto their salva-"tion," or to confer upon them that complete and eternal salvation, which he procured, prepared, and secured for them by his first coming and succeeding mediation.

Some are of opinion, that the return of Christ from heaven to earth at the last day, is here compared to, and was typified by the return of the high-priest from the inward tabernacle: For after appearing there in the presence of God, and making an atonement for the people in the plain dress of an ordinary priest, Lev. xvi. 23, 24. he came out arrayed in his magnificent robes, to bless the people who waited for him in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation: and it is thought that no image, for expressing the grand idea which the apostle intended to convey, could be presented more suitably than this would be to a Jew, who well knew the solemnity to which it referred. But it is not clear that the apostle intends any such comparison. He had said in the preceding verse, that after death is the judgment; and we know that the judgment will take place at Christ's second appearance, when he shall punish his enemies, and bestow complete and eternal salvation on them that wait for him: but I do not find any thing answerable to this at the high-priest's return from the inward tabernacle; and as to his blessing the people, this is what Christ has been engaged in ever since the commencement of his mediation, Acts iii. 26. Heb. vii. 25. though they are still waiting for the redemption of

their bodies, and the completion of their happiness, when he appears again, Rom. viii. 23. Col. iii. 3, 4. Besides, when the Jewish high-priest returned from the inward tabernacle, after having made an atonement there, he made a second atonement in his pontifical robes, for himself and for the people, Lev. xvi. 24. which is directly contrary to all that the apostle says of Christ's offering himself only *once;* and of his appearing the second time *without sin,* that is, without offering himself again as a sacrifice for sin.

CHAP. X.

CONTENTS AND SCOPE.

THE apostle in the foregoing discourse having shewn, that the tabernacle, priesthood, divine services, and temporal blessings of the Sinaitic covenant, were only worldly emblematical representations of the spiritual and heavenly things of the gospel economy, he, in the beginning of this tenth chapter, as a necessary consequence of all this, infers, That as the legal dispensation, and particularly its sacrifices, had only a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image or real substance of them, can never with these sacrifices which the high-priests offer continually every year, make the worshippers, for whom they are offered, perfect with respect to pardon and purification of conscience, ver. 1. This conclusion he farther establishes by the following arguments;—1st. That if these sacrifices could have perfected the worshippers, they would have ceased to be offered; because, upon supposition that the worshippers were once perfectly cleansed from guilt, their consciences would be no longer disquieted with sin, as if any more or farther sacrifice were necessary to expiate it; whereas, in the repetition of these sacrifices, there is a remembrance of sins made yearly, ver. 2, 3.—2d, That, in the nature of things, it is simply impos-

sible that the blood of brute animals, such as bulls and goats, should take away the sins of rational creatures, ver. 4.—3d, That as the legal sacrifices were ineffectual for this purpose, so they were to be set aside by the one sacrifice of Christ. This he proves from Psal. xl. 6—9. which represents Messiah, on his coming into the world, as addressing God thus, "Sacrifice and offering thou would-"est not, but a body hast thou prepared me; in "burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou hast "had no pleasure: Then, said I, Lo I come (in "the volume of the book it is written of me) to "do thy will, O God." On this remarkable passage, he observes, That Christ, by declaring that all the sacrifices, which were offered according to the law, were insufficient to please God, and then by undertaking to come himself and do his will in this respect, he sets aside the former institution respecting the legal sacrifices, that he may establish the second, namely, the will of God respecting his own sacrifice; and that by this will of God we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all, ver. 8, 9, 10.—That every ordinary priest standeth daily ministring, and offering often the same sacrifices, which shews that they can never take away sins; but Christ having offered one sacrifice for sins, instead of repeating it, he for ever sat down at the right hand of God; thenceforth waiting till his enemies be made his footstool, as was promised him, (Psal. xc. 1.) For

by one offering he hath perfected for ever the sanctified, or procured everlasting pardon and acceptance for them, ver. 11, 12, 13, 14.——4th, He proves this everlasting remission of sins from the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the promise of the new covenant, where, among other things, God promises, "And their sins and their iniquities "will I remember no more," ver. 15, 16, 17. From which he concludes, that where God forgives sins, so as never to remember them any more, there can be no farther need of any more offering for sin, ver 18.

The apostle having finished the doctrinal part of this epistle, and his admirable reasonings respecting the divine dignity of the person of Christ, with the superior excellence and efficacy of his priesthood and sacrifice, to the typical priesthood and sacrifices of the Mosaic institution, he proceeds, in this and the following chapters, to the practical improvement of the whole, which he here introduces by way of inference, from the foregoing discourse.

From the consideration that we now have freedom of access into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a way new made and living, which he hath dedicated and opened for us through the vail, that is, his flesh, and that we have a great priest over the house of God, he exhorts the Hebrews to approach unto God in his worship with a true heart, having hearts sprinkled from an evil

conscience, and the body washed in pure water, ver. 19, 20, 21, 22. He also exhorts them to hold fast the confession of the hope of salvation through him without wavering; for he is faithful that promised, ver. 23.—And as the means of stedfastness and perseverance in the faith, to consider one another in order to provoke to love and to good works; and not to forsake the assembling of themselves together for mutual edification, as some of them had already done, but, on the contrary, to be exhorting and encouraging one another to stedfastness, and so much the more as they saw the day of God's vengeance upon the unbelieving Jewish nation drawing nigh, ver. 24, 25.—He sets before them the aggravated guilt, and dreadful but certain punishment of apostates from the faith, ver. 26—31.—And, on the other hand, to fortify their minds against the fear of their persecutors, he reminds them of the inward support which they had experienced under their sufferings for the name of Christ after they were enlightened; with what courage and constancy they then endured them; the kind part they took with their suffering brethren; the compassion which they shewed towards himself while a prisoner, and the joyful manner in which they took the spoiling of their goods, from the assured hope which they had of a better and an enduring substance in heaven, ver. 32, 33, 34. He exhorts them therefore not to be discouraged, or to cast away their boldness of faith and hope,

which, if continued in, will have a great reward, ver. 35.—That in their present suffering state, they had indeed need of patience, that, having done the will of God by enduring to the end, they might receive the accomplishment of the promise, ver. 36.—Farther, to encourage them in patient perseverance, he intimates, that their present troubles would not be of long continuance; for that Christ would soon interpose for their relief; and to this he applies what is said of Habakkuk's vision, chap. ii. 3. "For yet a little while, and he "who is coming, will come, and will not tarry." And, to shew that their only safety lay in holding fast the faith, he cites ver. 4. "Now the just by "faith shall live; but if he draw back," God says, "my soul shall have no pleasure in him," ver. 37, 38.—Then he concludes with expressing his persuasion that the Hebrews were not of the number of those who draw back unto perdition, but of such as would continue to believe unto the salvation of the soul, ver. 39.

PARAPHRASE.

CHAP. X. 1. Wherefore the *Mosaic* law having *only* a shadow of the good things to come, *and* not the very image, *or substance*, of these things, can never with the same sacrifices which they offer each year, make those who come to *them* for ever perfect *in respect of pardon*.

2. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be

offered? *They certainly would;* because the worshippers having been once purified *from guilt* would have had no more conscience of sins, *so as to need any more sacrifice for them.*

3. But in these *sacrifices* a remembrance of sins *is made* every year.

4. For *it is* impossible *in the nature of things,* that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin.

5. Wherefore, coming into the world he *(Messiah)* saith, (Psal. xl. 6, 7, 8.) "Sacrifice and "offering thou wouldest not; but a body thou "hast prepared for me;

6. "Whole burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin, "thou art not well-pleased with *them:*

7. "Then I said, Behold I come (in the volume "of the book it is written concerning me) to do, "O God, thy will."

8. Having said above, That sacrifice and offerings, and whole burnt offerings, and *sacrifices* for sin (which are offered according to the law) thou willest not, neither art well-pleased with *them;*

9. Then he said, "Behold I come to do, O "God, thy will." *Hereby* he taketh away the first *kind of appointed sacrifices, their continuance being no longer the will of God,* that he may establish the second, *namely, the sacrifice of himself, which was to do God's will.*

10. By which will *of God* we are sanctified, *or effectually cleansed from the guilt of sin,* through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once.

11. And indeed, *not only did the high-priest offer once every year, but* every *ordinary* priest, *in his course,* standeth daily ministering and offering often the same sacrifices, which *shews that these* never can take away sins :

12. But he *(Christ)* having offered *only* one sacrifice for sins for ever sat down at the right hand of God, *vested with royal dignity and universal power as a kingly priest on his throne ;*

13. Thenceforth waiting till his enemies be made his footstool, *as was promised to him,* Psal. cx. 1.

14. For by one offering *of himself,* he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified *by it.*

15. *This* the Holy Spirit also testifieth to us *in the promise of making a new covenant,* Jer. xxxi. 34. for after having before said,

16. "This is the covenant that I will make "with them after these days, saith the Lord, I "will give my laws into their hearts, and upon "their minds will I write them," *he adds,*

17. "And their sins and their iniquities, I will "remember no more."

18. Now, where remission of these *is,* no more offering for sin *is required.*

19. Having therefore, brethren, freedom *of admission* into the entrance of the holies, by the blood of Jesus;

20. Which *entrance* he hath dedicated for us ; a way newly made and living, *into the heavenly*

sanctuary, through the vail, that is, *through the vail* of his flesh:

21. And having a great Priest over the house of God, *who presents our worship to his Father and makes intercession for us*,

22. Let us approach *to God through him* with a true heart, in full assurance of faith *in his efficacious mediation, our* hearts being sprinkled from an evil conscience, and *our* bodies washed in clean water.

23. Let us hold fast the confession of the hope without wavering; for faithful is he who hath promised.

24. And, *to promote our stedfast perseverance in the faith*, let us *attentively* consider one another for the *mutual* excitement of love and good works.

25. Not deserting the assembling together of ourselves, as *is* the custom of some; but exhorting *one another;* and so much the more as ye see the day *of God's vengeance, foretold by Christ*, (Mat. xxiv.) drawing nigh.

26. For if we sin wilfully *by apostacy*, after having received the knowledge of the truth, no more sacrifice for sins remaineth,

27. But some dreadful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

28. Any one who set at nought the law of Moses, died without mercy on *the testimony of* two or three witnesses.

29. Of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be counted worthy, who hath trampled on the Son of God *as an impostor*, and reckoned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, a common thing, and hath insulted *and blasphemed* the Spirit of grace?

30. For we know him who hath said, (Deut. xxxii. 35.) "Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will "repay, saith the Lord." And again, (ver. 36.) "The Lord will judge his people."

31. It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God, *when taking vengeance on the despisers of his Son and Spirit.*

32. But, *to renew your courage and steadfastness*, call to remembrance the former days, in which being *but lately* enlightened, ye *courageously* endured a great conflict of sufferings;

33. Partly indeed, in being made a public spectacle both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, in being companions of them who were thus treated.

34. For ye also suffered with *me* in my bonds, and took with joy the spoiling of your *worldly* substance, knowing in yourselves that ye have in the heavens a better substance, and lasting.

35. Wherefore, cast not away your boldness *in the faith*, which, *if maintained to the end*, hath a great recompence of reward *in heaven.*

36. For ye have need of patience *under present sufferings*, that, having done the will of God *by*

enduring to the end, ye may receive *the accomplishment* of the promise.

37. For yet a very little while, and he who is coming will come, and will not delay. *So that your present sufferings will not be long.*

38. Now the just by faith shall live; but if he draw back *through unbelief,* "My soul," saith God "will not be well pleased with him." See Hab. ii. 3, 4.

39. But we are not of them who draw back unto destruction; but of a *persevering* faith to *the obtaining* the salvation of the soul.

COMMENTARY AND NOTES ON CHAP. X.

Ver. 1. *Wherefore the law*—] As this verse is not a proof of the doctrine contained in the foregoing chapter, but an inference from it, the introductory particle γαρ should not be rendered *for,* but *wherefore.* By *the law* we must understand the law of Moses, and particularly all its institutions respecting the priesthood, and the service of the tabernacle by sacrifices and other ordinances of divine worship. This law

—*having a shadow of good things to come,* and *not the very image of the things,*—] Some imagine, that here there is an allusion to painting; σκια, *shadow,* denotes the rude draught or outlines of a picture, and that αυτην την εικονα, *the very image,* signifies the picture when finished, and exhibiting the exact likeness of the original. But I do not think the apostle alludes to painting at all, but to the shadow of a body as distin-

guished from the body itself. Thus, speaking of the ceremonial services, he says, "which are a shadow of "things to come; but the body is Christ's:" Col. ii. 17. Here the shadow is opposed to the body itself, of which it has but an obscure resemblance; and such was the priesthood, sacrifices, and services of the tabernacle: They were "not the very image of the things;" or, as the Syriac version has it, "not the substance of the "things themselves;" in which sense Chrysostom and Theophylact also interpret the words. The "good "things to come" were Christ's sacrifice, priesthood, and ministry in heaven, with all the benefits of his mediation. Now the law having but a shadow of these good things,

—*can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect.*] Some refer εις το διηνεκες, *continually*, not to the *offering* of the sacrifices, as our translation does, but to the *perfecting* of the comers thereunto; and according to this the sense will be, That the sacrifices of the law, being only a shadow of the true sacrifice, can by no means perfect for ever the comers to them. This seems to be the true sense; for it agrees exactly with the scope of the apostle's argument, and particularly with what he says, ver. 14. The sacrifices which are here particularly mentioned are those which were offered *year by year*, that is, on the tenth day of the seventh month, which was the great day of yearly expiation of the sins of the whole nation, on which the high-priest alone entered into the holy of holies with the blood of the sacrifices, and there presented and sprinkled it on and before the mercy-seat, Lev. xvi. Now if those sacrifices, offered by the high-priest on the most solemn occasion and nearest approach to the Divine presence, could not perfect for ever those for whom they were offered, much less could the daily sacrifices offered by the ordinary priests do it. *The* (οι προσερχομενοι) *comers to*, are the same with (οι

λατρευοντες) the *worshippers*, in ver. 2. and is a term frequently used in this epistle in that sense, as in chap. vii. 25. x. 22. xi. 6. and they are so called from their approaching to God, or to his altar, with their oblations, which could not for ever perfect them. The word τελειωσαι, when used in a sacrificial sense as here, signifies sometimes *to consecrate*, but most commonly *to cleanse* from the guilt of sin; and so it is explained in the next verse by the worshippers *being once purged*, that is, completely and for ever pardoned. The legal sacrifices could not procure this;

Ver. 2. *For then would they not have ceased to be offered?*—] The Syriac and Vulgate want the negative particle ουκ, *not*, and read it, "then would they have "ceased." Other copies have *not*, but read the clause interrogatively. The sense, however, is the same, viz. that if the legal sacrifices had procured a perfect and everlasting remission of sins, there would have been no occasion to repeat them yearly; they must, in that case, have ceased to be offered any more; and the reason given is,

—*for the worshippers once purged, should have had no more conscience of sins.*] Some may perhaps think, that as men are contracting new sins, the repetition of a perfect sacrifice might be necessary to expiate them. But this could not be necessary in respect of God, if one sacrifice had made full satisfaction, so as to be of perpetual efficacy.—Nor would such a repetition be necessary in respect of the conscience, if that one sacrifice once offered were believed to be sufficient to obtain continued pardon.

When the apostle, upon the supposition that the worshippers are once purged, says, that they "should have "had no more conscience of sins," he surely does not mean, that they would have no longer any consciousness of sinning; "for if we say that we have no sin, we "deceive ourselves," 1 John i. 8. Nor does he mean

that they would be insensible to the evil and demerit of their sins; for that is the state of a stupified or seared conscience, 1 Tim. iv. 2. Neither does he mean that they would find no more occasion for repentance, confession of sin, or frequent application to the throne of grace for mercy through that perfect sacrifice which once relieved their consciences; for that would contradict all the directions and exhortations given to believers under the gospel dispensation concerning these things. See Mat. vi. 12. Heb. iv. 16. 1 John i. 8, 9. Rev. ii. 5. iii. 18, 19. But from the nature of the apostle's argument, his meaning appears to be this, That had the sacrifices of the law procured a real and everlasting remission of sins, and the worshippers believed they had such efficacy, they would have had no more uneasiness of conscience on account of the sins for which the atonement was made, as if that were not sufficient, or as if a farther atonement were necessary to dischage them from the guilt of sin before God; but might have rested fully assured that God required no farther satisfaction for sin, nor any more offering for that purpose; consequently the repetition of the sacrifices must have ceased.

Ver. 3. *But in those* sacrifices there is *a remembrance again* made *of sins every year.*] So far were the legal sacrifices from procuring real pardon, and satisfying the conscience of the worshippers that their sins were to be remembered no more, that in these very sacrifices which were offered on the great day of expiation, there was a remembrance again made of sins every year; which proves that they did not obtain real remission of sins in the new covenant sense by these sacrifices, otherwise they would not have been thus remembered again: Besides, this remembrance of sins did not merely respect the sins they had committed during the preceding year, or since the last annual atonement; but *all* their former sins in general, as the confession then made seems to import, Lev. xvi. 21, 22.

It has been a query with some, whether the *remembrance of sins* here respects God's remembering them, or the worshippers' remembering them in the way of confession and acknowledgment. That the Israelites were to remember their sins, and confess them on the day of the annual atonement, is clear from Lev. xvi. 21, 31. Nay, believers under the gospel must still remember their sins, confess them and pray for the pardon of them; not indeed on the ground of a repeated sacrifice of atonement, as under the law; but solely on the ground of the perfect atonement which Christ hath made by offering himself once, and that a fresh application of its cleansing virtue may be made to their consciences. But by a remembrance of sins I think we are chiefly to understand God's remembering them, as manifested in his instituting the repetition of legal sacrifices; which shewed these were insufficient to procure pardon for the worshippers, and so their sins were still remembered or marked against them. To this the promise of the new covenant is opposed, viz. "I will forgive "their iniquity, and remember their sins no more," Jer. xxxi. 34. and which our apostle informs us is grounded on Christ's one sacrifice, by which he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Heb. x. 14—19. God does not remember sins when he does not entail the curse on them, nor require any more sacrifice to expiate them.

The apostle having proved, from the repetition of the legal sacrifices on every yearly day of atonement, that they could not make any real expiation of moral guilt, or procure a full and final discharge from its penalty, he proceeds farther to evince this from the nature of the sacrifices themselves.

Ver. 4. *For* it is *not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.*]—Bulls or bullocks and goats were the sin-offerings on the yearly day of expiation, though rams were also appointed for burnt offerings, Lev. xvi. 35. He mentions only the *blood* of bulls and goats;

for as their blood was their life, and the shedding of it their death, so it was only the blood that was carried within the vail, and by which the atonement was effected; and this is what the Lord himself declares, "The life of "the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon "the altar, to make an atonement for your souls; for it is "the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." Lev. xvii. 11.

But the main thing to be attended to here is, what the apostle denies to the blood of these animals, namely, that it is not possible that it should, αφαιρειν, take away sins; that is, expiate sins before God by a satisfaction given, or price of redemption paid, adequate to the demands of his justice, so as to procure pardon and acceptance with him to eternal life. This the apostle denies to the blood of all the repeated sacrifices of the law, and declares it impossible that sins should be finally and for ever expiated by such means. Should it be asked, wherein lies this impossibility? Might not God have accepted of these sacrifices as a sufficient atonement if he had pleased? In answer to this it might suffice to say, that in fact he was not pleased to accept of them as sufficient; nor were these sacrifices, though of his own appointment, well pleasing to him. But we may add a few other considerations, as,

1. That these sacrifices are declared to be only a shadow of good things to come, or of Christ's sacrifice and its effects, and to suppose that God might be satisfied with the mere shadow of an atonement is absurd, and betrays very superficial views of the demerit of sin, and of the claims of divine justice on the sinner.—2. Had it been possible for the blood of bulls and of goats to expiate sins, there would have been no need for the sacrifice of Christ; and how then could the wisdom, goodness, and justice of God appear in making the soul of his own well beloved Son an offering for sin, if the blood of brute animals could have answered that purpose, not to say equally well, but in any degree?—3. If the efficacy of a sacrifice has any

dependance at all on its nature and intrinsic worth; and if satisfaction must be made in the nature that sinned, and had incurred the sentence of death, then it is plain that the blood of bulls and of goats could have no possible efficacy in expiating the sins of men. Their nature was very different from, and greatly inferior to that of mankind, and therefore could not represent them, or be a proper substitute in their stead; hence their death could bear no proportion to the demerit of human guilt, nor could it be a proper example of its punishment, so as to vindicate the honour of the lawgiver, manifest his indignation against sin, and secure his law from contempt, far less demonstrate his justice in the forgiveness of sins. Thus it appears from the nature of things, that it was impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

We may add, that the death of any mere man could not possibly expiate the sins of the world, not only because it is no way adequate to such an effect, but also because all mankind being sinners themselves, the sufferings of any individual of them was due for his own sins, and therefore could not go to the account of others. But the sacrifice of Christ, being every way adequate to all that God required as an atonement, has entirely abolished the legal sacrifices, and effectually and for ever taken away sin. This the apostle proves by a citation from Psal. xl. 6, 7, 8.

Ver. 5. *Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, "Sacrifices and offering thou wouldest not; but a "body hast thou prepared me."*] These and the following words, though penned by David in the spirit of prophecy, are spoken in the person of Messiah, as is usual in the Psalms, and as the application of them by the inspired apostle clearly shews. Indeed, they could in truth be spoken by none else; for David could not say, that God did not desire any of the legal sacrifices or offerings from him, who was a zealous supporter and strict observer of the Mosaic institutions, though he knew, that without truth in the inward parts, and a broken and contrite

spirit for sin, such sacrifices would not be accepted, Psal. li. 6, 16, 17. Isa. i. 11. Nor could David in truth say, that he came to do that will of God which all the sacrifices of the law could not accomplish, namely, to expiate sins. The words therefore apply to Christ, and to him alone.

But it has been thought that there are some expressions in this xlth Psalm which cannot be considered as Christ's words, such as, "Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, "so that I am not able to look up: they are more than "the hairs of mine head; therefore mine heart faileth me," ver. 12. whereas we are sure that Christ was perfectly free of all personal sins. In answer to this some have given it as their opinion, that the latter part of this Psalm is not the prayer and complaint of Christ, but of David respecting his own case: That though there are many clear prophecies respecting Christ in the book of Psalms, yet it does not follow, that every Psalm where these are found must be wholly applied to him; for there are several instances, both in the Psalms and Prophets, of predictions concerning Christ which seem to be abruptly introduced, and a sudden transition is again made to another subject, without any express notice of a change of persons: That from the eleventh verse of this Psalm and downwards, the subject appears to be changed, and not to have been penned on the same occasion with the foregoing part of it. That the lxxth Psalm is here joined to the xlth, and that ver. 11. and 12. belong to that Psalm, though wanting when placed by itself, but seem necessary to introduce the succeeding prayer and complete the sense; for it begins abruptly with these words,—*O God, to deliver me:* From all which they conclude, that ver. 12. respects David's iniquities, and not Christ's who had none.

But though some of the things mentioned may be admitted, yet there is another solution of this seeming difficulty which I think much preferable. All the sin-offer-

ings appointed by the law were perfectly free of all iniquity or moral guilt in themselves, and indeed were incapable of it; yet the sins of the people were confessed over, and laid upon them, in order that they might be typically expiated or carried away: So, though Christ, the great antitype of all the legal sacrifices, was without any personal sin of his own; yet as "the Lord laid on "him the iniquities of us all," Isa. liii. 6. and "made him "to be sin for us, who knew no sin," 2 Cor. v. 21. he might call them his iniquities, as being placed to his account for satisfaction, whereby he became responsible for them: Or, which comes much to the same thing, by his iniquities he may mean the punishment and sufferings which as a substitute he sustained for the iniquities of his people; for the original word there used frequently signifies the punishment of sin, see Gen. iv. 13. xix. 15. Lev. i. 5. Job xxi. 19. 2 Kings vii. 9. The words therefore in ver. 12. may be understood of the sufferings of Christ as a sacrifice for sin. These sufferings were the innumerable evils which compassed him about, which made his soul exceeding sorrowful even unto death, and which drew from him prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death. See Heb. v. 7. with the notes.

The words which the apostle cites from Psalm xl. he says, were spoken by Christ "when coming into the world;" and indeed the words "Lo I come," and "a body hast "thou prepared me," plainly refer to the time of his incarnation. The expression imports his coming *from heaven* into the world; for he frequently declares, that he "came "down from heaven," John iii. 13. vi. 33, 38, 51. and says, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into "the world," John xvi. 28.

Now, as all the sacrifices of the law, (though of divine appointment, and suited to answer their own end as a shadow of good things to come) could not possibly expiate sin, Christ is here represented, when coming into the

world for that purpose, as addressing his Father in these words, "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not," that is, thou wouldest not accept of them as a sufficient atonement or satisfaction for sin. The reason of this is, not because they were not offered, κατα τον νομον, "according to the law," for the contrary is affirmed, ver. 8. Nor are we to imagine that God did not approve of the people's offering them in obedience to his will, and disapprove of those who neglected to offer them; for the whole law and the prophets testify the contrary, see Mal. iv. 4. True indeed, God frequently rejects these sacrifices when offered by the people in gross hypocrisy; when they preferred these external observances to inward holiness and moral obedience; or when they trusted to them for righteousness and acceptance with God; but none of these causes are assigned here: The reason of God's rejecting them was their insufficiency to atone for sin, as our author has already abundantly proved.

But though these sacrifices were altogether ineffectual for putting away sin, God of his infinite wisdom and grace has appointed and provided a sufficient sacrifice for that purpose, as is clearly intimated in these words, "but a "body hast thou prepared me:" That is, thou hast prepared for me a true human body, animated by a human soul, constituting a complete human nature. These words are exactly according to the LXX. but in our present Hebrew copies the words are, "mine ears hast thou open-"ed," or digged. Commentators have gone to work various ways in order to account for, and reconcile this difference; though they seem generally agreed that the sense must have been once the same both in the Hebrew original and Greek translation. Some think that "opening the ears" alludes to the law respecting a servant who did not chuse to go out free at the end of the seventh year, in which case his ear was bored through with an awl at the door posts, by which he was engaged

to serve his master for ever, Exod. xxi. 6. Deut. xv. 17. Others think that, by a figure of speech, the *ear* is put for the whole body, it being the organ for receiving instruction unto obedience, according to Isa. l. 5. "The Lord "God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious;" and so they explain, "mine ears hast thou opened," to signify, "thou hast made me perfectly obedient to thee." This indeed is a proper explanation of the words as they stand at present in the Hebrew text of the Psalm; but not of the words, "a body hast thou prepared me," as in the LXX. and in the apostle's citation. Some are of opinion that an alteration has been made in the translation of the LXX. to make it agree with the words of the apostle, which they think is not a citation but his own explanation of a mystery; and, as an evidence of this supposed alteration, it is alleged, that some copies of the LXX. have ὦτα *ears* instead of σωμα *body*, which is followed by the vulgar Latin. But it does not appear that the apostle is giving his own explanation of this clause more than any other part of the citation: Nor is it likely that he would have followed the LXX. in writing to the Hebrews, had it then been different from the genuine Hebrew text which they had among their hands: Neither is it likely that the LXX. should have been afterwards altered to make it agree with the apostle's words; for as none can be supposed to have had any hand in this but officious and injudicious Christians, so the numerous copies then existing both of the Hebrew and Greek would have testified against its being admitted into the text, although it might have been considered as a true explanation of the sense. As it cannot well be questioned whether the authority of the LXX. and that of the inspired apostle should weigh more than that of the present Hebrew copies, I am inclined to think that the Hebrew in this place has been altered through the carelessness of transcribers, or perhaps through design to weaken the evidence it affords, that the sacrifice of

Christ's body once offered, has for ever abrogated the whole of the Mosaic sacrificature. The apostle goes on with the rest of the citation;

Ver. 6. "*In burnt-offerings and* sacrifices *for sin thou* "*hast had no pleasure:*"] In the first clause of the citation, ver. 5. and in this, several expressions are used, which are not to be considered as synonimous or mere repetitions, but as referring to the different kinds of sacrifice appointed by the law. The Israelites were commanded to offer sacrifices of certain beasts, of fowls, and of the fruits of the earth. The chief of these were,

1. *Burnt-offerings*, which the Hebrews term GNOLAH, *i. e. ascension*, so called because their savour and virtue ascended up from the fire towards heaven. The LXX. term them ὁλοκαυτώματα, *i. e. whole burnt-offerings;* for, excepting their blood, which was brought into the holy place for reconciliation, their bodies were entirely consumed in the fire, Lev. i. 16, 27. and of these the priests had no share but the skin. Bullocks and goats were thus offered on the annual day of atonement, but on other occasions other clean animals might be substituted. Under this head may be classed the *continual burnt-offerings*, and also all occasional burnt-offerings, together with their appendages, the *Mincha*, or *meat-offerings* of flour, cakes, baked or fried, salt, oil, frankincense, &c. and the *drink-offerings*, or libations of wine poured out upon the sacrifice. These not being *whole* burnt-offerings, the Lord's part of them was burnt on the altar, and the remainder belonged to the officiating priests, who thus partook with the altar.

2. There were *sin-offerings*, which in Hebrew are termed HATTAH, that is, *sin:* The LXX. also express the same thing by ἁμαρτία, *sin*, and περὶ ἁμαρτίας, *for* or *concerning sin*. See Lev. iv. 3, 20, 25, 29.; and so it is said of Christ that God ἁμαρτίαν εποιησεν, *hath made him sin* for us, that is, a sin-offering, 2 Cor. v. 21. The sin-offerings were not in all respects regulated by the law respecting the stated

annual and daily sacrifices; but were offered occasionally sometimes for the sins of the whole community, at other times for the particular sins of individuals.

3. There were the *trespass-offerings*, which the Hebrews call ASHAM, and the LXX. πλημμελεια, Lev. v. 15. *Asham*, as well as *Hattah*, is a name both for the sin and the sacrifice. The crimes signified by these terms must be different, at least in some circumstances, but it is not easy in all cases to distinguish them. He that committed *Asham*, which we render *a trespass*, is said to "sin through "ignorance in the holy things of the Lord," and "to com-"mit any of these things which are forbidden to be done "by the commandment of the Lord, though he wist it not." Lev. v. 15, 17. But whatever may be the difference between *Asham* and *Hattah*, as to the nature or degree of the crime, it is plain that the sacrifices or rites for expiating them were different: None but rams and male lambs were admitted for *Asham*, or trespass-offerings, Lev. vi. 15, 18. but these were not used at all in *Hattah*, or sin-offerings. The blood of the sin-offering was put upon the horns of the altar, Lev. iv. 18, 25. whereas that of the trespass-offering was sprinkled round about upon the altar, chap. vii. 2. Besides sin-offerings were frequently offered for the whole congregation of Israel, chap. iv. 13, 14. but trespass-offerings were offered only for private persons. The difference of the appointed sacrifice, plainly shews that there must have been a difference in the nature or degree of the guilt.

4. Lastly, There were *peace* or *thank-offerings*, in Hebrew called SHELAMIM, and by the LXX. θυσια σωτηριου, *a sacrifice of salvation*. The law concerning these offerings we have in Lev. iii. and in vii. 11—23. where three kinds of them are mentioned, ver. 12, 16. The principal of these were offered for the whole congregation at the feast of Pentecost, Lev. xxiii. 19. At other times they were the free-will offerings of private persons as occasion required; and were offered in returning thanks to

God for deliverances or benefits received; also in soliciting future favours, and in the performance of vows. Of these offerings, and also of the meat and drink-offerings which accompanied them, after the Lord's part was offered to him, the remainder was eaten both by the priests and by those who brought them.

Now these are the sacrifices referred to, and concerning which Christ is represented as saying to his Father, "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not.—In whole-"burnt-offerings and *sacrifices* for sin, thou hast had no "pleasure." In the LXX. it is ϰϰ ἠτήσας, "thou didst "not require," or "ask;" but the apostle has it ϰϰ ευδοκήσας, "Thou wast not well pleased," *q. d.* Thou didst not take complacency or rest satisfied in these as a proper and adequate atonement for sin, or as what became thy wisdom, justice, and holiness to accept of as such. But when Christ came into the world to offer the sacrifice of himself, the Father repeatedly declares by an audible voice from the excellent glory, "This is my beloved Son "(εν ᾧ ευδοκησα) in whom I am well pleased," Mat. iii. 17. xvii. 5. When therefore all other sacrifices were of no avail to please God, Christ undertakes to do his Father's will by yielding himself to be a sacrifice for the sins of the world;

Ver. 7. "*Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of* "*the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God.*" "The volume of the book" is differently explained by commentators. Some think the word κεφαλις, rendered *volume*, should be translated the *head*, *top*, or *beginning*; others, the *chief article* or *sum* of the book. It may be observed that books then were not bound like ours, but rolled up as it were like a large map, and so the word may signify a *roll*, as it is rendered in Ezra vi. 2. Ezek. ii. 9. iii. 1, 2, 3. Some are of opinion, that by the *book* is meant the *book of eternity*, as they speak; others, the *book of the law*. My own opinion is, that by the book is meant not only the law, but also the prophets who

testified before hand the sufferings of Christ, Acts iii. 18. 1 Pet. i. 11. that book which he himself explained to his disciples after his resurrection, and which contains all that is written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning him, and particularly concerning his sufferings, Luke xxiv. 25, 26, 27, 44, 45, 46. And though Christ's words in Psal. xl. were written before the writings of the succeeding prophets, yet, by a common prophetic anticipation, they are represented as spoken by him *when coming into the world*, long after the scriptures of the Old Testament were completed.

We may also observe, that the apostle, in his citations, does not always quote the whole passage, but sometimes such parts of it as are directly to his purpose: An instance of this we have in ver. 16, 17. of this chapter. So here, in citing Christ's words, "Lo, I come—to do "thy will, O God," in the Psalm they are, "O my God," with this addition, "yea thy law is within my heart," or, "in the midst of my bowels," as the Hebrew has it. But from the whole we may learn,

1. That Christ came into the world in consequence of being sent of his Father, as he frequently declares. He came to do his Father's will, or to obey his commandment, especially the commandment to lay down his life for the sheep, John x. 17, 18. xiv. 31. which is the point the apostle has particularly in view as opposed to the legal sacrifices. It was by the things which he suffered as a sacrifice for sin, that he learned obedience even unto death; and obedience necessarily supposes a previous commandment. That he might be capable of this obedience, it was necessary that a body should be prepared or fitted for him; that is, a true and complete human nature, susceptible of all those sufferings of mind and body, in pouring out his soul unto death, which were necessary to expiate and take away the sins of the world.

2. From the words we may also learn, how ready and willing Christ was to do his Father's will, or obey his commandment in this matter. Though he had the clearest view of the infinite evil and demerit of the sins of mankind, and had fully before him all that he was to suffer as their substitute; yet he cheerfully undertook that arduous work which the Father gave him to do, saying, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God." Had he been reluctant or averse to comply with the will of his Father, it would not have been proper and acceptable obedience; but having also in view the glorious effects which were to result from his obedience, his whole heart was engaged in it; and so he adds, "yea, "thy law is within my heart." And as he was voluntary in his undertaking, so was he in accomplishing it; for though he was, by wicked hands, to be taken, crucified, and slain, Acts ii. 23. yet in the foresight of this he says, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay "down my life, that I might take it again. No man "taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have "power to lay it down, and I have power to take it "again. This commandment have I received of my "Father," John x. 17, 18.

The apostle now recapitulates the foregoing remarkable passage, and applies it directly to his purpose.

Ver. 8. *Above, when he said, Sacrifice and offering, and burnt-offerings, and* offering *for sin, thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure* therein; *(which are offered by the law;)*

Ver. 9. *Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.*] Two things are obvious from these words, —1. That God had no pleasure in the legal sacrifices as a sufficient atonement for sin. This is plain from the first part of Christ's address to his Father, "sacrifice "and offerings, whole burnt-offerings and *offering* for "sin, thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein;"

and the apostle observes, that this is spoken of the sacrifices "which are offered, κατα τον νομον, according to the "law," consequently were originally of divine appointment; which is all that the most zealous Hebrews could plead for their continuance; yet as Christ, who perfectly knew his Father's mind, declares that he was not well-pleased with them, they must be disannulled to give place to a more acceptable and efficacious sacrifice.—2. That the sacrifice of Christ has come in place of all the legal sacrifices. This appears from the succeeding part of Christ's words, "Then, said I, Lo, I come to do "thy will, O God." Christ in all things did the will of God; but here the connection requires that it should be more particularly understood of God's will or commandment to lay down his life as a sacrifice for the salvation of sinners, John x. 17, 18. xiv. 31. This was the leading design for which he came into the world, Mat. xx. 28. 1 Tim. i. 15. for which a body was prepared him, Heb. ii. 14, 15. and for which he took upon him the form of a servant, Phil. ii. 7, 8. This is that one obedience or righteousness by which many are made righteous or justified, Isa. liii. 10, 11. Rom. v. 18, 19. and is that obedience for which his Father loved him, and hath most highly exalted and rewarded him, John x. 17. Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11. On the whole of Christ's words in this citation the apostle observes, that "he taketh away the first, "that he may establish the second:" That is, he abolishes the former institution of the legal sacrifices, that he may establish the latter will of God which he came to do by offering the sacrifice of himself.

Ver. 10. *By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*]

Christ had said, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God," and here the apostle, referring to that, says, "By the 'which will," that is, by the doing which will of God, 'we are sanctified." *Sanctifying* here, and indeed throughout the most of this epistle, does not directly

signify the producing of inherent moral purity in the subjects of it; but is to be understood in a sacrificial sense, *i. e.* such cleansing or purifying as is effected by expiation or atonement; and chiefly consists in the remission of sins, the purification of conscience from its guilt, and in being consecrated or separated to God and his service as his peculiar people. (See note on chap. ii. 14.) And this sense is clear from the means to which this sanctifying is ascribed, it being "through "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once." For "Jesus, that he might sanctify the people with his own "blood, suffered without the gate," chap. xiii. 12. Christ's offering is here termed his *body*, plainly referring to the citation ver. 5. where, according to the reading of the LXX. the words are, "a body hast thou "prepared me:" But it signifies a body animated by a human soul, and so capable of suffering, or of being slain as a sacrifice; and it has already been observed, that his whole human nature is intended by his body. Thus, by the express testimony of the Jewish Scriptures, the apostle has proved, that as the legal sacrifices were at first established by divine authority, so they are abolished by the same authority; and that the sacrifice of Christ alone is that in which God rests satisfied, or is well pleased with as an atonement for the sins of men.

From this to the 19th verse the apostle briefly sets forth the superior dignity, excellence and efficacy of Christ's priesthood and sacrifice to those under the law.

Ver. 11. *And every priest standeth daily ministring, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices which can never take away sin:*] Some copies read *every high-priest;* but I prefer the common reading, which evidently includes the ordinary priests who ministered καθ' ἡμέραν, *daily*, while it does not exclude the peculiar ministry of the high-priest from time to time. See chap. vii. 27. The high-priest was indeed a more eminent type of Christ than the ordinary priests were; but both

of them prefigured him in his priesthood and ministry; and so are both distinctly mentioned in that view, chap. ix. 6, 7. and may be understood as included here.

Every Aaronical priest "standeth daily ministring." They performed their ministry in the standing posture of humble worshippers, and were not permitted to sit down in the presence of God, as if their work had been completed. They were "daily ministring:" The ordinary priests in their turn were employed every day, morning and evening, in the service of the tabernacle: The high-priest was also engaged from time to time, and particularly on the anniversary day of expiation. But there was no end of their work: They had continually to begin afresh as if nothing had yet been done; and had still to go on with a continued repetition of their services day by day, and year by year continually. The work they were more especially engaged in was "offering "sacrifices;" all of which laboured under the same essential defect; they "could not take away sins." They could not do it in the sight of God, by satisfying the demands of his justice; nor could they cleanse the conscience of the sinner so as to give him peace with God. Let them be offered ever so often, or with ever so much cost, solemnity and punctuality, they could (ουδεποτε) never, by any means, or at any time, really take away sins, or procure an everlasting pardon of them.

Ver. 12. *But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God.*] *Man* is here a supplement, though not distinguished as such; perhaps the designation *priest* or *high-priest* would have suited better in contrasting Christ with the legal priests. Both he and they offered sacrifice for sins; but their ministry differed essentially from his in various respects: They offered *many* sacrifices, and often-times the same; but he offered but *one* sacrifice, and that only *once:* They offered the *blood of others*, such as of bulls and of goats; but he offered *himself*, his *own blood:*

They *stood* daily ministring and offering those sacrifices, which, as they could never take away sins or please God, could not procure them rest in his presence, as if their atoning service was ended; whereas Christ, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever *sat down* on the right-hand of God.

His *sitting down* on the right-hand of God, or, of the Majesty on high, is several times mentioned in this epistle. See chap. i. 3. viii. 1. xii. 2. And this is stated as the consequence of his one sacrifice, and as a proof that it is complete and final, so as to leave no room for any other expiatory sacrifice, nor for a repetition of his own, he being now seated at God's right-hand, never more to suffer or die. It is also a conclusive proof that God is well-pleased and fully satisfied with this one offering, since, as the consequence and reward of it, he has advanced him in human nature to the highest station of dignity and honour, next to himself; for the Father's inviting him to sit at his right-hand (Psal. cx. 1.) imports his conferring on him royal dignity, power and universal dominion as King and Lord of all; and to this is added the promise of a complete and final conquest of all his enemies; "Sit thou at my right-hand until I make thine "enemies thy footstool:" So that "he must reign till he "hath put all enemies under his feet: and the last ene-"my that shall be destroyed is death." 1 Cor. xv. 25, 26. This excludes every idea of his coming to suffer again for sin. "He was once offered to bear the sins of many; "and unto them that look for him shall he appear the "second time without sin," *i. e.* without a sin-offering, "unto salvation." Chap. ix. 28. Instead therefore of his coming to die a second time as a sacrifice, he is

Ver. 13. *From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.*] From the time in which he sat down at God's right-hand as High-priest and King, his atonement was completed and for ever accepted; and as to (το λοιπον) *the rest*, or what remains of his work, he

is thenceforth expecting or waiting till (according to his Father's promise, Psal. cx. 1.) his administration shall issue in the complete and final destruction of all his and his people's enemies: But as to any farther offering for sins, he hath entirely put an end to that, and to any farther need of it;

Ver. 14. *For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.*] The word τελειωσαι, to *make perfect*, is used in different senses, and the kind of perfection intended must be determined by the nature of the means by which it is effected, and also by the nature and condition of the person or thing to which it is applied. Here the means is Christ's one offering, and as the leading design of that was to make atonement for sins, and procure such a remission of them as that God should remember them no more, as explained in the following verse; so to perfect for ever in that sense, is to procure a complete and everlasting pardon of sins for them. Christ hath done all that was necessary to this by his one offering, which therefore is never to be repeated. The persons who are perfected by it are τȣς ἁγιαζομενȣς, *the sanctified;* that is, those to whom the benefit of his sacrifice is actually applied, and so have their hearts purified from an evil conscience, through faith in the sufficiency of the blood of Christ to cleanse them from all sin, and to obtain their acceptance to eternal life. Thus they "are sanctified through the offering of the body of "Jesus Christ once," ver. 10. So that both the words *perfected* and *sanctified* are to be taken in a sacrificial sense, and expressive of the effects of Christ's one offering.

Ver. 15. Whereof *the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us;*—] In proof of what he had just now advanced, viz. that Christ by one offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified, he refers the Hebrews to the testimony of the Holy Spirit in Jer. xxxi. 34. as a full attestation to the truth of it. The testimony he has particularly in view is a promise of the new covenant of which Christ is

Mediator, and which he has procured and ratified with his blood, namely, the promise of the everlasting remission of sins;

—*for after he had said before,*] That is, after the Lord had previously mentioned some other promises, such as,

Ver. 16. "*This is the covenant that I will make with* "*them after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my* "*laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write* "*them;*] *He then adds,*

Ver. 17. "*And their sins and iniquities will I remem-* "*ber no more.*"] As ver. 16. seems to be merely an introduction to the 17th verse, on which the apostle's proof evidently rests, to mark this the more distinctly, I have prefixed the words *he then adds,* and am informed that there are some copies which have a reading equivalent to this; but supposing it not to be genuine, and an addition to the original text, it is at least a necessary supplement, without which our author's sense would not be so obvious.

Under the old covenant, and as an essential part of it, the Lord appointed the repetition of sacrifices, and particularly of the yearly atonement, in which there was "a "remembrance again *made* of sins every year," as being not really expiated by these, but still charged to account, ver. 3. and the reason given is this, "for *it is* not possible "that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away "sins, ver. 4. But in the promise of the new covenant, which was to be made and established in Christ's blood, the Lord says, "their sins and iniquities will I remember "no more." From which the apostle draws this obvious conclusion.

Ver. 18. *Now where remission of these is,* there is *no more offering for sin.*] Here the apostle explains "re-"membering sins no more," to be the *remission* of them; and it is clear, that where God forgives iniquities, so as never to remember them any more, no farther atonement is either required or needful. Thus the Holy Spirit hath

testified, "that by one offering Christ has perfected for "ever the sanctified," ver. 14. See note on chap. viii. 12.

From what the apostle has said of Christ's sacrifice, and confirmed by the testimony of the Holy Spirit, we may learn what to think of the doctrine of the Church of Rome, respecting what they call the sacrifice of the mass, which was established by the council of Trent, and declared to be a "true and proper propitiatory sacrifice for sin," (Sess. xxii. Can. l. 3.) in offering which the Roman priests are so incessantly employed, and in which the Papists are taught to trust for the pardon of their sins, in proportion to the number of masses, which either by favour, money, or legacies, they can procure to be said for them, after they are dead. This is evidently (as MACKNIGHT observes), a most impudent and pernicious error, as it proceeds on the supposition, that the offering of Christ's body once is not sufficient to procure the pardon of sin for ever, but must be frequently repeated; consequently that the testimony of the Holy Spirit, and the apostle's conclusion from it, is false, viz. that "there is no more offering for sin." Should they reply, that their mass is only the representation and commemoration of the sacrifice of Christ, this would be to give up the cause; for a representation and commemoration of a sacrifice, is not a sacrifice at all, far less a true and proper propitiatory sacrifice for sin, as they affirm.

The apostle having finished the doctrinal part of this epistle, he now proceeds to the practical improvement of it, in a variety of instructions, exhortations, and cautions, from this to the conclusion; and he begins here with an exhortation, which he introduces by way of inference from the foregoing discourse, and the encouragements it affords in our approaching God.

Ver. 19. *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.*] Upon the ground of the perfection and efficacy of the sacrifice and priest-

hood of Christ, believers have *boldness*. The word παῤῥησια signifies properly *freedom of speech*; but by an easy figure, signifies *boldness*, or an holy filial confidence in approaching the Divine Presence; and it is opposed to the state of things under the law, particularly to the spirit of bondage and fear, which prevailed in Old Testament worshippers, and which was much influenced by the very institutions and manner of their worship.

Believers have this freedom or boldness "to enter into "the holiest," literally, "in the entrance of the holies." By the *holies* is meant that which was typified by the holy of holies in the tabernacle and temple, and which is explained to be heaven itself, chap. ix. 24. This is the New Testament seat of worship; for there the glorious presence of God resides; there the mercy-seat or throne of grace is placed, chap. iv. 16. and there Jesus our High-priest, the minister of the holies, and of the true tabernacle, appears in the presence of God for us, chap. viii. 2. ix. 24. So that there is no holy place nor seat of worship on earth as formerly: Yet it does not follow, that by "the entrance of the holies," the apostle directly means death, as the learned MACKNIGHT explains it; for though the spirits of just men do not personally enter into heaven till death, nor their bodies till the resurrection; yet those who, in this life, worship God in spirit and in truth, have access to the throne of grace in heaven, and that with boldness and confidence through the faith of Christ, chap. iv. 16. Eph. ii. 18. iii. 12. This is what the apostle has here more immediately in view; and by which he encourages the Hebrews to the practical use of it in drawing near with a true heart, &c. ver. 22. Believers who have this access are greatly privileged above Old Testament worshippers: "The way into the holiest of all was not yet made mani-"fest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing," chap. ix. 8. None but the high-priest alone had access into the typical holy of holies, and he only but once a-year. Neither the people nor the ordinary priests were permitted

to enter or worship there, nor so much as to look into it but at their peril, Lev. xvi. 1, 2, 17. The people were kept at a distance, standing without during the time of the service, Luke i. 10. But now, in opposition to this, believers have boldness in the entrance of the holies by the blood of Jesus,

Ver. 20. *By a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the vail, that is to say, his flesh :*] If this translation gives the sense, it is neither by following the order, nor giving the etymological meaning of some original words. The ἣν which begins this verse, seems to refer to την εισοδον in the foregoing, and signifies *which entrance :* Ενεκαινισεν signifies *he hath new made;* but as this word is used, Heb. ix. 18. to express the solemn ratification of the Sinaitic covenant by the blood of sacrifice, it may here be rendered *dedicated* or *consecrated.* Two things are affirmed of the way which is thus dedicated for us, viz. that it is προσφατον και ζωσαν, *newly slain and living :* To attribute these things to a *way* seems both unsuitable and inconsistent; but when we recollect that Christ says, " I am the way, and the truth, and the life : no " man cometh unto the Father, but by me," John xiv. 6. we may easily see how these things apply to him, seeing he also declares, " I am the living one, and was dead ; " and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen ; and have the " keys of hell and of death," Rev. i. 18. He is the Lamb that was slain as a sacrifice for our sins, and now he ever liveth in heaven to make intercession for us, and so is the way of our present access to, and acceptance with God in our worship. Farther, as he is also possessed of the keys of hell and of death, being the resurrection and the life, and having power to raise us at last from the dead ; so he is the way of our personal entrance into heaven itself, that we may be ever with him. The apostle says, the way which Christ hath dedicated for us into the holies is *through the vail,* which he explains *of his flesh.* The entrance into the holy of holies in the tabernacle and temple, was

through the vail or curtain which separated it from the holy place or court of the priests. What answers to that vail, we are told, is Christ's flesh, that is, his body, or human nature, in which he suffered as a sacrifice for us on the cross, and which instead of precluding the people's entrance into the presence of God as that did, has consecrated and laid open a way of access into the holies, for all who draw near or come unto God through him, chap. vii. xix. 25. for he "hath once suffered for sin, the just "for the unjust, that he might bring us to God," 1 Pet. iii. 18. When Christ expired on the cross, the vail of the temple was miraculously rent in twain from the top to the bottom, Matt. xxvii. 51. and as this must have laid open the holy of holies, I apprehend that the apostle alludes to this circumstance when he calls Christ's flesh the vail.

Ver. 21. *And* having *an High-priest over the house of God;*] In the original he is here styled ἱερεα μεγαν, a *Great Priest:* Great in dignity, honour, and authority: Such a Great Priest as has been before described at large, every part of whose character and qualifications makes him highly worthy of our most unlimited trust and confidence in all our concerns with God. He is a Great Priest, επι, *over the house of God;* not a servant like Moses, but a Son over his house, chap. iii. 5, 6. that is, over the universal church, the whole family of God in heaven and earth, Eph. iii. 15. being the head over all things to the church which is his body, Eph. ii. 22, 23. Col. i. 18. and having full power effectually to manage and transact all its affairs; and as he is always living to make intercession for us, he is able to save to the uttermost, them that come unto God by him, Heb. vii. 25. So that he is in all respects such an High-priest as became us, being fully suited to our need, ver. 26. all which affords the highest encouragement in our approaches and applications to God through him.

The apostle having briefly mentioned the privileges of

believers under the gospel, proceeds to inculcate the practical improvement of them.

Ver. 22. *Let us draw near*—] *q. d.* Since every obstruction is now removed, and the way of access to God is laid open by the sacrifice and mediation of Christ, *let us draw near.* Προσερχομαι, signifies *to approach* or *come to* God in his worship and service. Hence worshippers are termed *comers*, Heb. x. 1. *comers unto God*, chap. vii. 25. chap. xi. 6. The exhortation to draw near or come to God imports the whole of our intercourse with God in all the exercises of religious worship, whether public or private. The manner in which we are to draw near or approach unto God in his worship is

—*with a true heart*,—] That is, with a sincere, honest, and upright heart, or, as our Lord expresses it, we "must "worship the Father in spirit and in truth," John iv. 23, 24. This is opposed to hypocrisy, whereby men draw near with their mouth, and with their lips do donour God, while they have removed their hearts far from him, Isa. xxix. 13; and it is also opposed to the letter or outward typical worship of the law, and is the spirit and truth of it. We are to draw near

—*in full assurance of faith*,—] This πληροφορια, or full assurance of faith is not, as many conceive, an absolute certainty of a man's own particular salvation; for that is termed *the full assurance of hope*, ch. vi. 11. and arises from faith and its fruits: but *the full assurance of faith* is the assurance of that truth which is testified and proposed in the gospel to all the hearers of it in common, to be believed by them unto their salvation, and is also termed *the full assurance of understanding*, Col. ii. 2. Though all that the gospel reveals, claims the full assurance of faith as being divine infallible truth; yet assurance being here connected with the foregoing discourse as its improvement, it seems more particularly to respect the assurance of faith in the efficacy and all-sufficiency of Christ's priesthood and one offering, for procuring pardon, access to

God, and acceptance with him in his worship here, consequently an entrance into his immediate presence hereafter. Farther, we are to draw near

—*having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience,*—] This alludes to the sprinklings under the law whereby the Israelites were cleansed from ceremonial defilements, and so fitted to approach to God in his worship, Num. xix. But instead of these legal sprinklings, which could not make the worshippers perfect as pertaining to the conscience, Heb. ix. 9. but only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh or body, ver. 13. we are to draw near having sprinkled hearts from an evil conscience, that is, from the accusations and terrors of a guilty conscience, and that through faith in the blood of Christ, which pacifies the conscience and cleanseth it from dead works to serve the living God with freedom and acceptance, ver. 14. To these particulars the apostle adds,

—*and* our *bodies washed with pure water.*] This may allude to the divers washings or immersions under the law, chap. ix. 10. and by which both the priests and people were purified for approaching to God in worship, Lev. xvi. 4. Num. viii. 7. Lev. xiv. 8. xv. 5—12. xvii. 15, 16. But as it cannot be supposed that the apostle is exhorting Christians to continue the use of these legal washings, it is thought that by having *the body washed* he means the cleansing of the outward conversation from the deeds of the body or filthiness of the flesh, Rom. viii. 13. 2 Cor. vii. 1. and by *pure water* the purifying influence of the Holy Spirit, which is compared to pure or clean water, Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Such purification is without doubt essentially necessary to our worshipping God acceptably.

But there are many learned and judicious commentators who understand both *the body* and the *water* literally, and explain these words of Christian baptism. That this is what is meant appears very probable; for there is no other washing of the body appointed under the gospel but in baptism: And it is most natural to understand both *body*

and *water* here in a literal sense; for if having *the body washed with pure water* were to be understood entirely of something spiritual and internal, it would be hard to distinguish it from *the sprinkling of the heart from an evil conscience*, mentioned immediately before, which seems to be the spiritual signification of baptism. So also, I apprehend, we must distinguish being *born of water* from being *born of the Spirit*, John iii. 5. and *the washing*, or laver, *of regeneration* from the *renewing of the Holy Spirit*, Tit. iii. 5. the former being the outward sign, and the latter the spiritual signification of baptism. PEIRCE, who seems positive that baptism is here intended, says, "Our translators were doubtless in the wrong in joining "this clause to the end of ver. 22. which most of the "printed Greek testaments I have seen make the begin-"ning of ver. 23. They, who, following the pointing of "our translation, understand our author as saying, 'Let "our actions be washed and pure also,' will not easily "produce any place of scripture wherein *το σωμα*, *the body* "is put for the *actions*.—But nothing can be more exact "than this expression when understood of baptism, which "is literally a washing of the body, and is also called *the* "*washing of regeneration*." See also WHITBY, MACKNIGHT, and many others. If this clause ought to begin ver. 23. it will stand in close connection with the following words, thus, *And the body being washed with pure water*,—

Ver. 23. *Let us hold fast the profession of* our *faith without wavering*,—] The original words are *κατεχωμεν την ὁμολογιαν της ελπιδος*, "let us hold fast the confession "of the hope;" but our translators, on the authority of one MSS. only, have substituted *faith* for *hope*. The difference, however, is not very material, since it is in believing that men are filled with joy and peace, and abound in hope, Rom. xv. 13. faith being "the confidence of things hoped for," Heb. xi. 1. according to Christ's commission to his apostles, Mat. xxviii. 19, 20. Mark xvi. 15, 16. baptism

was at first administered to none but those who were previously instructed in the doctrine of the gospel, and who manifested their belief of it by a personal confession of their faith in Christ, and of their hope of salvation through him; and so they received baptism as the sign of the remission of their sins, Acts ii. 38, 41. xxii. 16, and of their communion with and conformity to Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection; and by it they were solemnly engaged thenceforth to walk in newness of life, Rom. vi. 3—15. Col. ii. 11—14. Gal. iii. 27. Nothing therefore could be more pertinent than to urge the Hebrews to hold fast their faith and hope in Christ, which they openly and boldly professed in the face of danger at their baptism; and that they should persevere in this "without "wavering," or being moved either by the threats of their persecutors, or the sophistical reasonings of false teachers. To encourage them, and indeed all Christians, in holding fast the confession of the hope, he uses this argument,

—*for he is faithful that promised:*] He had insisted much on the promise of God made to Abraham, which was confirmed with an oath, that we might have strong consolation who have fled to lay hold on the hope set before us, Heb. vi. 13—19. This promise has been already accomplished so far as relates to the coming of the Seed, Christ, and is accomplishing in blessing the nations in him, who is the procurer and pledge of all the promises which are yet to be accomplished, and all are yea and amen in him; and particularly the promise of the heavenly country, the rest which remains to the people of God, which is the ultimate object of the Christian hope. Now as God has promised to assist believers in every duty, to support them under every trial, to give them the victory over their enemies, and a glorious reward at last, which shall put an end to all their present toils, and crown their labours with eternal happiness; so the consideration that he is faithful who hath promised, is one of the strongest encouragements

to hold fast the confession of the hope without wavering. As the means of mutually confirming each other in the hope of the gospel, and of promoting the proper fruits of it among them, he gives them the following important exhortation,

Ver. 24. *And let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works :*] The word καταανοωμεν, signifies, "let us attentively consider;" for κατα increases the force of the word with which it is compounded. We are not merely to be concerned about ourselves as detached individuals, but, as members of one body interested in each other. We are attentively to consider one another's wants, infirmities, temptations, and dangers, and to administer suitable assistance, advice, admonition, caution, consolation, or encouragement, as the respective case of each may require. By such means we are mutually "*to* "*provoke to love*," that is, to stir up and excite each other to that peculiar love which Christ has enjoined upon his disciples in his new commandment, enforced by the example of his love to them, and by which all men were to distinguish them as his disciples, John xiii. 34, 35. We are also to provoke each other *to good works*, by which in Scripture are generally meant kind and beneficial works, including particularly the work and labour of love to Christ's name in ministring to the saints, Heb. vi. 10. Rom. xi. 13. These are substantial fruits of true faith and genuine Christian love, and without which faith is dead, and love is only in word and in tongue, James ii. 14, 18. 1 John iii. 17, 18.

To provoke one another to love and to good works from proper principles, gospel motives must be used, which will have a direct tendency to strengthen and confirm each other in faith and hope. Again, whatever provokes to mutual love and its fruits, as it attaches Christians to each other, and strengthens their union, so it fortifies them against the attempts of the common enemy, and makes them stand "fast in one spirit, with one mind,

" striving together for the faith of the gospel, in nothing " terrified by their adversaries." Phil. i. 27, 28. Farther, the exercise of brotherly love, and of the good works of it, having the promise of the heavenly reward, produces solid evidence in the conscience of believers that they are of the truth, and have passed from death unto life, 1 John iii. 14, 19. and so diligence in the work and labour of love is prescribed as the way of attaining to the full assurance of hope, Heb. vi. 11. But as real Christian love with its fruits cannot take place, nor the assurance of hope be obtained, without holding fast the truth of the gospel, which is the foundation of faith and hope, the apostle cautions the Hebrews against the neglect of the appointed means necessary to that end;

Ver. 25. *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some* is;—] The former direction may relate to their christian intercourse one with another in general; but this particularly and expressly respects their stated and public assembling of themselves for worship and mutual edification. It is by means of the public assemblies or churches of the saints, that the visible and scriptural profession of Christ's name is exhibited and kept up in the world, Rom. i. 8. 1 Thess. i. 7, 8. and they are compared to golden candlesticks, or lamps, as diffusing the light around them, Rev. i. 20. It is in these assemblies that the various gifts and offices were at first placed and exercised, 1 Cor. xii. 27—31. Gal. iv. 11, 12. and it is in them only that God's word and public ordinances of social worship, can be statedly either administered or observed. The institution of churches, and the social ordinances delivered to them by Christ and his apostles, are in all respects most excellently calculated to promote the union and mutual love of Christians, and to edify and establish them in the faith and hope of the gospel; and therefore the apostle exhorts the Hebrews, " not to forsake the assembling of themselves together, " as the manner" or custom " of some *is*." It appears

from this, that some of the Hebrews had so far given up with the open profession of Christ's name as to withdraw from the public assemblies of the church. PEIRCE is of opinion that the cause of this was their bigotted attachment to the ceremonial law, and their being disgusted at the reception of Gentile converts into their fellowship without conforming to it. In others it might be the fear of persecution from their unbelieving countrymen: But whatever were their reasons for this conduct, it appears, from its awful tendency afterwards mentioned, that the apostle considered it as a symptom of begun apostacy, and therefore cautions the rest of them against leaving off the assembling of themselves together, which was to relinquish the public profession of Christianity, and the means of their mutual edification and establishment. He also directs them how they were to be engaged in their public assemblies, in order to promote the ends of their union;

—*but exhorting one another;*—] *To exhort* παρακαλειν, is earnestly to call, persuade, and excite men to their duty, by setting the proper motives to it before them, some of which are suited to awaken cautious fear, and others to encourage hope and administer comfort. Exhortation includes both, and so the same original word is sometimes rendered *to exhort*, 1 Thess. iv. 1. and at other times *to comfort*, ver. 18. Though exhortation is a branch of the work of pastors and teachers, and belongs to their office, Rom. xii. 9. 2 Tim. iv. 2. Tit. i. 9. yet not exclusively, but is the duty also of others, who have "knowledge, and "are able also to admonish one another," Rom. xv. 14. The apostle is not here addressing pastors in particular, but all the brethren in general who may be in some measure qualified to speak to edification, exhortation, and comfort. What he enjoins is a *mutual* duty, "exhorting "one another;" and though *one another* is a supplement here, yet the connection and sense require that it should be supplied from the preceding verse. The duty pre-

scribed is also a *public* duty to be performed in their assemblies; "not forsaking the assembling of yourselves "together, but exhorting." From the connection too, it appears that the ends proposed for this mutual duty was to establish each other in the faith and hope of the gospel, and to provoke to love and to good works. The apostle had formerly given a similar exhortation to the Hebrews, and with the same view, chap. iii. 12, 13. "Take heed, "brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of "unbelief, in departing from the living God: But exhort "one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any of "you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." To stir them up to greater diligence in this, and every other appointed means of promoting their establishment and perseverance in the faith, he adds,

—*and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.*] The day which is here more immediately referred to is the day of the Lord's coming to put an end to the Jewish church and state, and to punish that people for their infidelity and rejection of the Messiah, and persecution of his followers. This day had been long and frequently foretold. It is termed "the great and terrible day of the "Lord," Joel ii. 1, 2, 31. Acts ii. 19, 20. Our Saviour predicting this awful event, says, "These be the days of "vengeance, that all things which are written may be "fulfilled," Luke xxi. 22. As to the time, he informs his disciples, that the generation then living should not pass till all be fulfilled, ver. 32. He also sets before them the signs which were to precede that dreadful calamity, and by which they might see the day approaching, or drawing nigh, ver. 8—12. for by the time of writing this epistle it was but about eight or nine years from the destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple, which put an end to its services. He assures his followers that there shall not an hair of their head perish, ver. 18. But this safety they were to expect only by attending to his instructions and cautions against being deceived by false Christs and pro-

phets who were to arise, ver. 8. by avoiding intemperance and the cares of this life, which might put them off their guard, ver. 34. and by persevering in the faith to the end, Matt. xxiv. 13. In this way they might be assured of escaping, not only the punishment that was coming on the Jewish nation, but the still more dreadful punishment in a future state, which awaits those who, having been once enlightened, apostatize from the Christian faith.

Ver. 26. *For if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth,*—] To *sin wilfully* does not mean every sin which we commit with the consent of our will; for it will be hard to mention any sin in which the will is not more or less concerned. We find in scripture many of the approved children of God falling into such sins as necessarily implied a consent of the will for the time; yet they are not said to *sin* (εκβσιως) *wilfully*. Paul was a blasphemer of Christ, and compelled others to blaspheme him; he was a persecutor and injurious, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, Acts ix. 1. xxvi. 10, 11. 1 Tim. i. 13. Yet it is not said that he did this *wilfully*, but *ignorantly*, in *unbelief*. Peter though he had much to learn, was a sincere lover of Christ, and resolved to die with him; yet he denied him with imprecations and oaths, not *wilfully*, but through *fear*. Mat. xxvi. 74. The expression to *sin wilfully* seems to refer to Num. xv. 30, 31. where it is described as *doing* ought *presumptuously*, or *with an high hand*, and as *reproaching the Lord*, and *despising* or contemning *the word of the Lord:* but the apostle shews that to sin wilfully against the gospel is a more heinous sin, and deserves sorer punishment than was inflicted on those who despised Moses' law, ver. 29.

This sin cannot be committed till "after we have re-" ceived the knowledge of the truth;" hence Paul could not commit is ignorantly in unbelief. The *knowledge of the truth* here is the same with being *once enlightened*, chap. vi. 4. (See the notes there and on ver. 5.) Peter admits, that some, after they have *known the way of righte-*

ousness, and escaped the pollutions of the world, *through the knowledge* of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, may be again entangled therein and overcome; turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them; and so like the dog return to his vomit, and as the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire, 2 Pet. ii. 19—22. And our Lord in the parable of the sower shews, that men may "*receive the word with joy*, and *for a while believe*, who "in time of temptation fall away," Luke viii. 13. These and such passages shew, that men may not only *know* the truth, but *believe* and have *joy* in it, and that it may have a considerable influence on their conduct for a time, and yet, after all, sin wilfully and fall away irrecoverably. For such, the apostle says,

—*there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.*] Some explain these words and what follows as if the apostle had said, "As the legal sacrifices are now abolished, and the "temple wherein they were offered is about to be destroy-"ed, if we believers sin wilfully (and all sins are wilful) "after we have received the knowledge of the truth, we "have no occasion for any other sacrifice but what Christ "has already offered: But as to the unbelieving Jewish "nation, who have rejected that sacrifice, nothing remains "to them but a certain fearful looking for of judgment," &c. But as this gloss does not distinguish the wilful sin of apostacy from other sins, nor apostates from the unbelieving Jews who never professed the faith of Christ; and as it neither agrees with the words nor scope of the passage, it is needless to spend time in a formal refutation of it.

Mr. Peirce on this passage says, "An emphasis is de-"servedly laid upon that word *wilfully;* by which a wide "difference is made between the case of those who are "borne down for a time, and forced contrary to their own "inclination, by the violence of their sufferings, to disown "the truth, and those who deliberately and wilfully apos-"tatize from Christianity. Of this latter only does he use

" such sharp expressions in this place, with which we may " compare chap. vi. 4—6. 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21." And on the words *there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins*, he says, " To comprehend the full strength of this argument, we " must remember what was before fully proved, that the " legal sacrifices upon which the Jews were so prone to " depend, could not possibly make an atonement for sin, " and consequently no reasonable hope could be left the " Jews by reason of them. There was no other sacrifice " that could avail for sins but the sacrifice of Christ; and " therefore, if they had no part in that, there could remain " no other sacrifice for them. Now that such *wilful apos-* " *tates* could have no part in the sacrifice of Christ, and " therefore must be left in the most deplorable and reme- " diless condition, is what he farther argues in the follow- " ing verses."

Let it be observed, that the apostle is not here speaking of the unbelieving Jews who had never been enlightened so as to profess the faith of Christ; but of those of them only who had received the knowledge of the truth and once professed to believe it; who had seen the miraculous evidence by which it was at first confirmed as a revelation from God, and had themselves, some of them at least, been partakers of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, chap. vi. 4, 5. and yet, in the face of all that evidence, turned out wilful apostates, and determined enemies to Christ, his cause and people, and so rejected the only effectual sacrifice which God had appointed and accepted; now, for such as thus sin wilfully, we are told, " there re- " maineth no more sacrifice for sins." The only sacrifice remaining under the gospel is the sacrifice of Christ, and as they wilfully despise and renounce the benefit of that sacrifice, they have no sacrifice for sin whatever remaining to them; consequently, must be destitute of every reasonable and revealed ground of hope, and nothing is left to them,

Ver. 27. *But a certain fearful looking for of judgment*

and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.] God's wrath against his adversaries is frequently compared to fire on account of its irresistible, tormenting, and devouring nature. Perhaps there is an allusion here to what Moses says, Deut. iv. 24. and to what the Lord himself threatens, chap. xxxii. 21, 22. Our apostle elsewhere represents Christ as punishing the wicked by fire at the last day, "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven "with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance "on them that know not God, and that obey not the gos-"pel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished "with everlasting destruction from the presence of the "Lord and from the glory of his power." 2 Thess. i. 7—9. This is the punishment which awaits wilful apostates from the gospel, and of which the most terrible apprehensions must ever haunt them while they allow themselves to think at all on their hopeless case. This judgment without mercy on wilful apostates, he illustrates by what took place under the law of Moses, with which the Hebrews were well acquainted.

Ver. 28. *He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses;*] The word rendered despised is αθετησας, which signifies a *putting away* or *disannulling;* and so the same word is translated, chap. vii. 8. ix. 26. It is not every sin against the Mosaic law that is intended, nor even every capital crime which incurred death by that law, such as murder, adultery, incest, Sabbath-breaking, &c. but it was sinning *wilfully*, that is, *presumptuously*, or with an *high hand* directly against God himself, *reproaching* or blaspheming the Lord, and *despising* his word, Num. xv. 30, 31. Lev. xxiv. 14—17. and preferring the false gods of the heathen to him as the objects of trust and religious worship, Deut. xiii. 6—12. xvii. 2, 3. notwithstanding all the manifestations he had made of himself as the only living and true God. This was a total renunciation of their covenant relation and allegiance to the God and King of Israel, who had redeem-

ed them from Egyptian bondage, and sanctified them to be a peculiar people to himself. Any who thus despised the law of Moses, "died without mercy under two or three "witnesses:" No atonement was to be made for him, no mercy or pity was to be shewn him; but he was immediately to be put to death on the evidence of two or three witnesses, and under their hands, which were to be first upon him, and afterwards the hands of all the people, Deut. xvii. 6, 7. Though this punishment was no greater than that which was inflicted on other capital offenders, yet it was the utmost that could be inflicted by the hands of men, who can only kill the body.

Some are of opinion, that by *Moses' law* the apostle only means the ceremonial part of it, and Mr. PEIRCE says, "Should the contrary be supposed, it will not be easy to "understand how our author could argue (as he seems "evidently to do) from the less to the greater: for the "directly blaspheming the supreme God could not be a "smaller crime than the indignity here mentioned as of-"fered to the Son of God." But it appears to me that by *Moses' law* the apostle means the whole Mosaic institution taken complexly, without distinguishing it into moral and ceremonial. The main design of this epistle is to set forth the superior excellency of the gospel to the legal dispensation; and his manner of reasoning here is the same as in chap. ii. 1—5. where he calls Moses' law *the word spoken by angels,* and urges their giving the more earnest heed to the gospel from its being *spoken by the Lord* himself. Now the word spoken by angels must certainly include the whole of that law which was given from mount Sinai both moral and ceremonial; for Stephen, speaking of Moses, says, "This is he that was in the church in the "wilderness, with the angel who spake to him in the "mount Sinai, and with our fathers; who received the lively "oracles to give unto us." Acts vii. 38. And, blaming the Jews, he says, "Who have received the law by the "disposition of angels, and have not kept *it*," ver. 53.

Does he blame them merely for having transgressed the ceremonial part of it? Or did the lively oracles only consist of that? Farther, Paul speaking of the law, says, "it "was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator." viz. Moses, Gal. iii. 19. and Moses' own account of the delivery of the law clearly shews, that it was not only the ceremonial but moral law that was thus ordained in his hand. See Exod. xx. xxxi. 18. Deut. v. ix. 10.

It should be observed, that the ten words proclaimed from the mount, Exod. xx. and afterwards written with the finger of God on two tables of stone, were the very words of the covenant which God made with Israel, chap. xxxiv. 28. and by that peculiar covenant they were bound to observe all the statutes and judgments, ceremonial and judicial, contained in that book of the law which Moses wrote, chap. xxiv. 4. xxxiv. 27. for these were the explication at large of the ten precepts of the covenant, as applied and adapted to the peculiar state of that people; so that in breaking any of these they transgressed the law written on the tables. Therefore, when any sinned wilfully or presumptuously against God, it made no difference, either as to guilt or punishment, whether it was in the matter of a moral or positive precept; he was to die without mercy. Now, if such was the punishment of him who despised Moses' law, which had but a shadow of good things to come,

Ver. 29. *Of how much sorer punishment suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God*—] Here the apostle appeals to their own judgment, whether he who sins wilfully against the grace of the gospel covenant, does not, from the higher degree of his guilt, deserve sorer punishment than he who presumptuously despised Moses' law. To give them a deep impression of the more heinous nature of this sin, consequently of the justice of its being more severely punished, he describes its nature and aggravation in the most striking terms. He had said in general that it was to

"sin wilfully after having received the knowledge of "the truth;" and indeed without this knowledge it cannot be committed at all; but here he proceeds to shew more directly the nature of it, and represents him who is guilty of it as "having, καταπατησας, trodden under foot "the Son of God." An expression which signifies to treat him with the greatest disdain and contempt, as men do with the most worthless and vilest of things, such as the filth or mire of the street on which they trample. See Isa. xxvi. 6. Mic. vii. 10. Mal. iv. 3. It also imports their treating him with the utmost rage and fury; for when a man tramples upon another, and stamps upon him with his foot, it is looked upon as a sign of the greatest rage; and in this sense the expression is used, Isa. lxiii. 3, 6. Dan. viii. 10. And this answers to what he had said before of such wilful apostates, "They crucify to themselves," (or in themselves, *i. e.* in the rage and enmity of their hearts and blasphemies,) "the Son of God afresh, and put him "to an open shame," chap. vi. 6. This is their treatment of him whom they once acknowledged to be the true Messiah, the beloved Son of God, and Saviour of the world! Surely the punishment of such must be infinitely more severe than that which was inflicted on the despisers of Moses' law. Another aggravating ingredient in this sin is, —*and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing,*—] The "blood of "the covenant" is the blood of the Son of God, called "the blood of the everlasting covenant," chap. xiii. 20. It is Christ's "blood of the new covenant, which was shed "for many for the remission of sins," Matt. xxvi. 28. and by which he ratified the covenant and sanctified the people, Heb. xiii. 12. This precious blood of Christ which hath procured the new covenant and all its blessings, the apostate esteems no better than common or unclean blood, a thing of no more value, or efficacy, than the blood of a common malefactor; and to aggravate his guilt it is added, "wherewith he was sanctified."—

Some have a doubt if these words belonged originally to the text; for they are not in the Alexandrian copy, and Chrysostom omits them; but as they are to be found in the greater part of ancient MSS. it would be unsafe to leave them out.

Commentators, however, who admit them to be genuine differ as to their meaning. Some understand the words to signify "the blood of the covenant wherewith he," that is, Christ, "was sanctified," which they think agrees with what he says, "For their sakes I sanctify myself," John xvii. 19. Christ indeed sanctified himself, that is, he dedicated, devoted, or set himself apart to God as a sacrifice for the sins of his people, and that, on the ground of his oblation once offered, he might officiate as their High-priest in heaven. But ἁγιάζειν, *to sanctify*, in this epistle, signifies to *cleanse* or *purify* from the guilt of sin by the blood of sacrifice, chap. ii. 11. ix. 13. xiii. 12. And as Christ was without sin, and knew no sin, though he was made a sin offering for us, 2 Cor. v. 21. Heb. iv. 15. he could not in that sense sanctify himself, as he needed not, like the legal high-priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's, chap. vii. 27. I am therefore of opinion, that the person who is here said to have been sanctified is not Christ but the apostate; and that this is stated as a most dreadful aggravation of his guilt and ingratitude, that he should count the blood of the covenant wherewith he himself was sanctified a common or unholy thing.

But it will be asked, In what sense can it be said, that one who turns out an apostate was ever sanctified? In answer to this let it be observed, That the Scriptures speak of men according to their profession and outward appearance. The apostles, in writing to the churches, address them as saints, elect, faithful, and sanctified, 1 Cor. i. 2. 1 Pet. i. 2. that being their professed and visible character. When individuals of them apostatized from the profession of the faith, it is not attributed to their having never

known the gospel, nor experienced any benefit from it; on the contrary, it is admitted that they have, and that thereby their guilt is highly aggravated, 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21. The Lord of the wicked unmerciful servant is represented as having *forgiven* him all his debt, Matt. xviii. 27, 32. The fruitless blind professor is said to have been *purged* from his old sins, 2 Pet. i. 9. and the false teachers to deny the Lord that *bought* them, 2 Pet. ii. 1. The apostate is supposed to have been once *enlightened* in the knowledge of the truth, Heb. vi. 4. x. 26. to have received the word with *joy* and *believed* for a while, Luke viii. 13, and to have *tasted* of the heavenly gift, and of the good word of God, Heb. vi. 4, 5. Though there may be an essential difference between such attainments and those of true Christians, yet we cannot distinguish them in their abstract nature, but only by their concomitants and effects. The things specified seem to imply, that the apostate had been once sanctified by the blood of Christ, so far as to experience its efficacy in relieving and purging his conscience from the guilt of sin and fear of wrath, and to give him some degree of joy and peace, as well as to produce some partial reformation on his life: But that now he despises that sanctifying blood of the covenant, accounting it a common or unholy thing. To complete the description of this dreadful sin, the apostle adds,

—*and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?*] The Holy Spirit is the author of every gracious disposition of heart, which is called the fruit of the Spirit, Gal. v. 22, 23; but I apprehend he is here called the *Spirit of grace*, as being the author of those miraculous powers and spiritual gifts which are termed *grace*, Rom. xii. 6. Eph. iv. 7. and which in the first age were conferred on believers for the spread and confirmation of the gospel: When therefore any apostatized from the faith of Christ to Judaism, after having witnessed those miraculous gifts, and especially after having been possessed of them himself, as is supposed, Mat. vii. 22. Heb. vi. 4, 5. he could not possibly

evade the force of such proofs, but by joining issue with the Scribes and Pharisees in absurdly ascribing them to the agency of evil spirits, Mat. xii. 24. than which a greater indignity and more malicious insult could not be offered to the Spirit of God. And this is that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit which our Lord declares shall never be forgiven either in this world, or in the world to come, ver. 31, 32. Therefore the punishment of such a sinner must be inexpressibly greater than that death without mercy which was inflicted on the despisers of Moses' law, which was only the death of the body by the hands of men; whereas the punishment of such audacious apostates is to be inflicted by the immediate hand of God himself.

Ver. 30. *For we know him that hath said,* "*Vengeance* "belongeth *unto me, I will recompence,*" *saith the Lord*—] This citation is from Deut. xxxii. 35. and the apostle introduceth it with the words, "For we know him who "hath said," *q. d.* we know his character, that he is a God of irresistible power and inflexible justice; and as the righteous and supreme judge of the world, is determined to punish incorrigible offenders in proportion to the malignity of their crimes, for he hath said, "Vengeance "*belongeth* unto me; I will recompence." The words "saith the Lord," are neither in the original Hebrew nor Greek translation, but are added by the apostle to shew that God is the speaker, as they are also in Rom xii. 19. xiv. 11. 2 Cor. vi. 17. The citation applies in general to all cases which call for divine vengeance. In Rom. xii. 19. it is used to dissuade Christians from avenging themselves on their ensmies or persecutors, but to leave that to God, who hath said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." The law of Christ forbids us to avenge ourselves, or even to harbour resentment in our hearts against those who have injured us: On the contrary, we are called to imitate Christ's example, "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; "when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed his "cause to him that judgeth righteously," 1 Pet. ii. 23.

And though to maintain peace and good order in the kingdoms of this world, the magistrate is ordained as the "minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath on him that "doth evil," Rom. xiii. 1, 4. yet as "Christ's kingdom "is not," like the Jewish Theocracy, a kingdom "of this "world," John xviii. 36. so he has not authorized the ruling powers to compel their subjects, by civil pains and penalties, to embrace the gospel, or to observe its peculiar institutions, nor punish with the sword those whom they may consider as infidels, hereticks, or apostates. The vengeance due to such, God has reserved in his own hand, who is the only competent and infallible judge of what punishment they deserve, and is fully able to inflict it in a just proportion to the demerit of their guilt. On this subject the apostle brings forward another citation from the same passage:

—*And again,* "*The Lord shall judge his people.*"] This is taken from Deut. xxxii. 36. and we have the same words in Psal. cxxxv. 14. The word κρινω, *to jugde,* is used in different and sometimes opposite senses, according to the connection in which it stands, or the characters of those who are the subjects of it. Sometimes it signifies to plead the cause of his people by delivering or defending them, 1 Sam. xxiv. 12, 15. Psal. xliii. 1. lxxxii. 3, 4. At other times it signifies to punish or take vengeance on transgressors, Gen. xv. 14. 2 Chron. xx. 12. Ezek. vii. 3. Both these senses are implied in Deut. xxxii. 36. The Lord often judged or punished his people, old Israel, by means of their enemies, when they rebelled against him; but afterwards, when they were reduced to the utmost extremity, he is said to "repent himself for his servants, when he "seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up "or left;" for then, by turning his hand, which punished his people, against their enemies, he judged them both, by delivering the former, and taking vengeance on the latter; and this seems to be the literal meaning of the passage. But as the apostle is here speaking of the dreadful punish-

ment of apostates from the Christian faith:—as those whom he has more immediately in view were Hebrews who are supposed, after having been once enlightened, to have fallen back to Judaism, and turned out inveterate enemies of Christ and his followers:—and as such were apt to flatter themselves with impunity on account of their being God's people, distinguished from the heathen by their national covenant, and zealous observers of the Mosaic institutions;—therefore he cites this passage from Moses in order to shew, that the Lord will judge, *i. e.* punish his professing people when they rebel against him, and that with greater severity than he does others, in proportion to the superior advantages which they have enjoyed, but abused with such horrid ingratitude and contempt. See Mat. xi. 21—25. Luke xii. 47, 48.

Ver. 31. It is *a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*] When any of old Israel sinned against God presumptuously, or with an high hand, they were to be tried by the judges and punished with death; and when, as a nation, they revolted from God, and fell into idolatry, &c. he often punished them by means of their heathen enemies; yet the power of human instruments could extend no farther than to kill the body, nor could they protract the sufferings of any a moment beyond that: But it must be infinitely more dreadful to fall as victims of vengeance into the immediate hand of the living God himself, who is of almighty power to execute wrath to the utmost extremity on the despisers of his Son and Spirit; and as he lives for ever, is able for ever to perpetuate their sufferings. See Luke xii. 4, 5. Mat. xxv. 41, 46. Mark ix. 43—49. 2 Thes. i. 8, 9.

The account which the apostle gives here of wilful apostacy, as doing despite to the Spirit of grace, seems to be much the same with what our Lord says of the sin against the Holy Ghost, in his caution to the Pharisees when they ascribed his casting out devils to the agency of the prince of devils; for it is not clear that he is there

charging them with having actually committed that sin, or that they were capable of committing it before the full and complete testimony of the Spirit was given to Christ, which was not till after his resurrection and glorification. Compare John vii. 39. xv. 26. xvi. 8—15. with Acts ii. 33, 36. v. 32. he on that occassion declares, that "the blas-"phemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven "unto men," Mat. xii. 31. But some have endeavoured to soften his words, and would have him to mean, that it shall not be forgiven without repentance; which would imply, either that other sins may be forgiven without repentance, or that there is no difference between this and any other sin in respect of repentance or forgiveness; whereas this sin is distinguished from all other sins in both these respects. As to repentance, the apostle says, that "it is "impossible to renew them again unto repentance," Heb. vi. 4, 6. And with respect to forgiveness, while our Lord admits that "all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be for-"given unto men," he absolutely declares, that "the blas-"phemy against the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven, "neither in this world, nor in the world to come." Mat. xii. 31, 32. Mark iii. 28, 29.

But as some weak Christians, from ignorance of the nature of the unpardonable sin, and of the real state of their own minds, or perhaps from a tincture of melancholy, are apt to suspect that they have committed it, it may be proper, before we dismiss this subject, to observe,

1. That no sin, however great, which men may commit through ignorance and unbelief, or previous to their having received the knowledge of the truth, is the unpardonable sin. The crucifixion of Christ was certainly a sin of the first magnitude; yet, amidst the tortures of the cross, he prayed for his murderers, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," Luke xxiii. 34. which prayer was undoubtedly answered. Peter charged home on the Jews their having killed the Prince of life; yet as he knew that through ignorance they did it, as did also their rulers, he

calls them to repent and be converted that their sins may be blotted out, Acts iii. 11, 17, 19. Saul of Tarsus was a cruel persecutor of Jesus, compelling his disciples to blaspheme; ye he obtained mercy, because he did it ignorantly in unbelief, 1 Tim. i. 13.

2. No act of sin, however heinous, and even though committed after being once enlightened, if the word of God calls to repent of it, and contains any instance of repentance or forgiveness for that or such like sin, can be considered as the unpardonable sin. A call to repentance always supposes that there is place for it. It implies, that upon repentance and application to the blood of Christ for cleansing, pardon will be granted; and this is expressly promised, Prov. xxviii. 13. 1 John i. 9. David, though enlightened by the Spirit and an inspired prophet, fell into the sin of adultery and deliberate murder; yet he repented and was forgiven, 2 Sam. xii. 7—14. Psal. xxxii. 5. Peter, after his faith had been approved of, denied his Lord thrice, with imprecations and oaths; yet he obtained repentance and forgiveness, Mat. xxvi. 69—75. The churches of Galatia after they had been called into the grace of Christ, were in a great measure subverted from the faith by false teachers; yet the apostle travailed in birth of them again until Christ was formed in them, Gal. i. 6. iii. 1, 3, 4. iv. 9, 15, 19. In short, there may be many grievous occasional sins committed by real Christians, after having received the knowledge of the truth, and tasted of the good word of God, which, though highly aggravated, are none of them that wilful sin which the apostle describes, nor what our Lord calls the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost which shall never be forgiven.

3. From the scripture account of this sin it may easily be distinguished from all others—1. It is a *wilful sin*, and committed not through mistake, or reluctantly through the overbearing force of temptation, but of design, and from a deliberate determination of mind; which considering the knowledge they have of the truth, must involve in it the

most daring presumption.—2. It is termed a *falling away*, or *drawing back;* not merely a partial decline or backsliding; but a total apostacy from the faith of the gospel; openly and avowedly renouncing Christ, the profession of his name, and all part and interest in him, and disclaiming all allegiance and subjection to him.—3. This is clear, from the hatred, malice, and contempt with which they treat him: They are represented as crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh, putting him to an open shame, treading him under foot, and counting his blood an unholy thing. And because the Holy Spirit bore witness to him by his miraculous operations and spiritual gifts, therefore they spitefully insult the Spirit of grace, by blasphemously ascribing these to evil spirits.

From this account of the unpardonable sin we may see, that it is not a simple transient act, or occasional transgression of a particular precept, but a wilful, total and avowed apostacy from the faith of the gospel, and that in the face of all the supernatural evidence by which its truth is confirmed; in opposition to all the motives to stedfastness which it holds forth, and in violation of all the obligations which they have come under: This can be accounted for upon no other principle than a deep rooted and settled enmity of heart against Christ, his holy character, and the way of salvation through him. As there is no remission of sin without a sacrifice, and no effectual sacrifice for sin, but that which they despise and reject; so nothing remains to them but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, ver. 27. which instead of disposing them to repentance, only serves to increase their enmity, it being a desperate hopeless fear of him as their enemy, such as devils have.

The design of the apostle in setting before the Hebrews the awful consequences of apostacy, was to put them upon their guard against every approach towards it, and to make them take heed lest there should be in any of them an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God; which is always a necessary caution, especially in times of

particular temptation, or when symptoms of that sin begin to appear. But it was far from his design to drive any of them into despair, or even to discourage them, but the very reverse. Therefore persons ought to beware that they charge not this sin either on themselves or others, without a due consideration and knowledge of its nature as described by the apostle, and having the fullest evidence that the description really applies to the case. When a man through mistake imagines that he has committed the unpardonable sin, it will have the most pernicious effects upon him. For though he should still highly prize the gospel salvation, and think them happy who partake of it, (which does not consist with this sin;) yet the apprehension that he has forfeited that salvation, and is himself cut off from any part or interest in it, must overturn his faith in the atonement, and hope in divine mercy, fill him with terror and despair, and militate against every principle of love and obedience.

The apostle, having cautioned the Hebrews against apostacy, encourages them to persevere, by reminding them of the divine support they had formerly received under very severe trials for Christ and which made them sustain them with courage and joy.

Ver. 32. *But call to remembrance the former days, in which after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;*] Soon after the Hebrews were enlightened in the knowledge of the truth, they were called to sustain a great αθλησιν, combat of afflictions by persecution from their countrymen; particularly that which began at the death of Stephen, Acts viii. 1. and soon afterwards by Herod, chap. xii. 1. The sufferings of the churches in Judea are also mentioned in 1 Thess. ii. 14. and they had all their share in these distressing conflicts one way or other; for he adds,

Ver. 33. *Partly whilst ye were made a gazing-stock, both by reproaches and afflictions;*—] The word rendered *a gazing-stock* is θεατριζομενοι, which signifies to be made

public spectacles, as malefactors in a theatre. Christians were sometimes exposed to wild beasts in the public theatres, and to this Paul seems to allude in 1 Cor. xv. 32. But we do not read of the Jews exercising this species of cruelty in the two first persecutions to which he here refers; and therefore the expression may be understood figuratively of their being put to public disgrace and open shame, by all manner of defamation, and *reproaches;* and also by *afflictions*, that is, punishments inflicted on their bodies; for they were committed to prison, beaten in the synagogues and judgment halls, and several of them were actually put to death. See Acts v. 18, 40. viii. 3. xxii. 19. xxvi. 10, 11. These afflictions they suffered partly in their own persons; he adds,

—*and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used:*] As they were deeply interested in the common cause for which their Christian brethren were so treated, so they felt not only for themselves, but also for them, as being members of one body; and they openly owned, kept company with them, shared in their reproaches and afflictions, and comforted and assisted them to the utmost of their power. This he instanceth in his own case;

Ver. 24. *For ye had compassion of me in my bonds,*—] Or, συνεποθησατε, *ye suffered with* me. As *me* is a supplement here, and as some respectable MSS. and ancient versions read τοις δεσμιοις, *with those in bonds*, instead of τοις δεσμιοις μου, *in my bonds*, that reading is adopted by some. But as the common reading, which is followed by our translators, is supported by the greatest number of MSS, and as the other reading seems to have originated with the Vulgate versions by which some other MSS. were early corrected, (See Macknight's Gen. Pref. to the Epistles, p. 3, 4, 5. 2d. edit.) the common reading ought to be preferred. Paul was well acquainted with what the believing Hebrews suffered in the first persecution, for he had a most active hand in it; but when he was converted,

and became a zealous promoter of the faith which he once destroyed, he then experienced the same treatment himself, 2 Cor. xi. 23, 24, 32. Some have ascribed the writing of this epistle to Clement, some to Barnabas, others to Luke, as has been observed; but there is no mention in Scripture of any of these having ever been in bonds in Judea, as the author of this epistle must have been; whereas we know that Paul was in bonds at Jerusalem, where he was apprehended, Acts xxi. 33. and was afterwards kept a prisoner at Cesarea for more than two years, where his acquaintance were permitted to come and minister unto him, Acts xxiv. 23, 27. and it is to their sympathy and kindness towards him while in that situation that he here refers. He next takes notice of another part of their sufferings, and of the noble spirit with which they bore it;

—*and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.*] They had not only suffered in their character, their persons, and by their fellow-feeling with their persecuted brethren; but also by the loss of their goods or substance, which was violently wrested from them by their rapacious persecutors. But it may be asked, why does he bring to their view these afflicting scenes? Certainly not to discourage them, but as the means of bringing also to their recollection the state of mind with which they bore these trials, and what it was that supported them under them. They took the spoiling of their goods not reluctantly but joyfully, because they knew in themselves, or were fully persuaded in their own minds by the promise of God and the earnest of the Spirit in their hearts, that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance. The lively faith and hope of this made them cheerfully suffer the loss of their worldly temporal substance rather than deny Christ, or relinquish their prospect of the heavenly inheritance. Their calling to remembrance that joyful hope which supported them under their former sufferings for Christ, had a tendency to renew their

fortitude, and to excite repentance in such of them as might have since given way to unbelieving discouragements, as the ground of hope still remained the same. From these encouraging considerations he exhorts them,

Ver. 35. *Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.*] As if he had said, Seeing ye have formerly suffered so much both in your persons and property, and have sustained these trials with courage and resolution, being supported under them with the joyful hope of eternal life; do not faint or be disheartened upon the approach of similar or even additional trials: "Cast not away your confidence," (παῤῥησιαν) or your boldness, freedom or courage in your profession of Christ's name, and firm adherence to his cause, whatever sufferings you may endure. To encourage them to a stedfast perseverance in this, he adds, "which hath great re-"compence of reward." He seems to refer to our Lord's words, who, after having mentioned the different kinds of persecutions which his disciples might expect to meet with in this world for his sake, says, "Rejoice and be ex-"ceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven," Mat. v. 12. Their sufferings might be indeed very great; but they were not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in them, Rom. viii. 18. In a comparative view all the afflictions which the saints suffer for Christ in this world are but light and for a moment, but they work out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 2 Cor. iv. 17. But as no affliction for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous, and when severe and of long continuance, men are apt to be wearied and faint in their minds, therefore he says,

Ver. 36. *For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.*] Patience is that fruit of the Spirit which enables a Christian to bear afflictions and calamities with constancy and composure of mind, joined with a cheerful submission to the will of God; and is opposed to fretting, repining, or

giving way to despondency under the afflicting dispensations of his providence. It is said, "tribulation worketh patience;" it gives an opportunity for its exercise and improves it, Rom. v. 3. Jam. i. 2, 3, 4. This is the effect of sanctified afflictions, and without patience they do not profit, but have a contrary tendency. The Hebrews suffered persecution from their countrymen for the cause of Christ, and so had need of patience. It was absolutely necessary in such circumstances to their perseverance in holding fast the faith and the open profession of it; consequently, it was necessary in order to their obtaining at last the promised reward; and so he says, "ye have need "of patience, that, having done the will of God, ye may "receive the promise." They were to do the will of God not only by obeying his commands, but also by patiently suffering according to his will for righteousness' sake, 1 Pet. iii. 17. iv. 19. and having persevered to the end in doing the will of God, they were to receive the accomplishment of the promise, viz. eternal life, 1 John ii. 25. Patience here may also signify a humble and submissive waiting for the accomplishment of the promised deliverance from trouble in God's own time, although it may seem to be delayed. This sense agrees more with the passage alluded to in the next verse.

Ver. 37. *For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.*] The words in this and part of the following verse allude to what Habakkuk says of his vision, chap. ii. 3, 4. but are not introduced as a direct quotation from him. There is a variation in the words; and as to the events referred to, they are quite different. Habakkuk is foretelling the deliverance of Judah from captivity after an appointed time, and the punishment of their enemies the Chaldeans by the overthrow of the Babylonian empire: But the apostle is here encouraging the believing Hebrews to persevere in faith and patience under their present trials, by the near prospect of Christ's coming to deliver them from the persecutions

of the unbelieving Jews, by destroying Jerusalem and overthrowing the Jewish church and state.

He that shall come, or, ὁ ερχομενος, *he who is coming*, was an appellation given by the Jews to the Messiah, Mat. xi. 3. xxi. 9. But it is evident that the apostle here does not refer either to his first or second personal coming. Not to his *first* when he came in the flesh; for he had thus come more than sixty years previous to the date of this epistle, and therefore it could not then be matter of promise which the Hebrews were to wait for. Nor does he refer to his *second coming* at the last day, to raise the dead and judge the world, for that was not to take place in *a little while*, (a mistake which some had fallen into, 2 Thess. ii. 2, 3.); nor has it yet taken place after the lapse of near eighteen hundred years.

But it should be observed, that there are other comings of Christ spoken of besides these two. He promised that after his ascension, he would come to his disciples in the power of his Spirit to set up his kingdom in the world. John xiv. 18, 19. and this promise he fulfilled on the day of pentecost, Acts ii.—He promised to come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, Mat. xxiv. 30. Rev. i. 7. which was fulfilled in the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem, and in the punishment of his malicious enemies the Jews, Mat. xxiv. 2, 21, 22, 29. This he repeatedly terms *the coming of the Son of man*, ver. 27, 30, 37.—Again he came to punish and dethrone the heathen powers of the Roman empire, to overthrow the established idolatry, and to deliver his people from a long train of bloody persecutions, as was foreshewn to John, Rev. vi. 12. to the end, xii. 7, 8, 9.—Farther, he came to overthrow the man of sin and son of perdition, viz. the apostate church of Rome. The apostle clearly foretold, that the Lord would consume him with the breath of his mouth, and destroy him with the brightness of his coming, 2 Thess. ii. 8. See also Rev. xvii. xviii. xix. 11—21. and this he is now fast accomplishing. In short, Christ is said to come

as often as he thinks fit to interpose by any signal act of his power and providence, either for the advancement of his kingdom, the deliverance of his people, or the punishment of his enemies. So that to every state and period of the church, there is a coming of Christ suited to their condition.

Now, as the Hebrew Christians had been always more or less persecuted by their unbelieving countrymen the Jews, the apostle encourages them, under these trials, by the near prospect of Christ's coming to deliver them; and alluding to Habakkuk's words, says, "For yet a little while "and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.' For Christ had promised, that when he should execute vengeance on his enemies the Jewish nation, his friends would not only be preserved from that calamity, Luke xxi. 18, 19. but obtain deliverance from their persecutions. "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look "up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption," or deliverance, "draweth nigh," ver. 26. He had also told them, that these events would soon take place, "Verily, I say "unto you, This generation shall not pass away till all be "fulfilled," ver. 32. So that it was but a *little while*, and only about eight or nine years after the writing of this epistle. This day of vengeance was to come unexpectedly as a snare upon the Jewish nation, ver. 35. for though they were repeatedly forewarned of it, they did not believe it, any more than their forefathers believed the threatened judgment by the Chaldeans. Compare Hab. i. 5. with Acts xiii. 41. But Christ admonishes his disciples to make a proper use of the warning he had given them of the near approach of that day, "Take heed to your-"selves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with "surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, "and so that day come upon you unawares. Watch ye, "therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted "worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, "and to stand before the Son of man," Luke xxi. 34, 36.

So also James and Peter, apostles of the circumcision, exhort the believing Jews to patience, watchfulness and prayer, in the prospect that the end of all things relating to the Jewish church and state was at hand, James v. 7, 8. 1 Pet. iv. 7. These, indeed, are duties which are always incumbent on Christians in every period of the church until Christ come again; but especially on the approach of dreadful judgments, with the dangers and temptations which attend them.

Ver. 38. *Now the just shall live by faith;*—] These words are taken from Hab. ii. 4. and, according to their arrangement in the common translation, might be understood to signify, that the just or righteous man shall live by his faith as the influencing principle of his life or conduct; as when Paul says, "We walk by faith, not by sight." 2 Cor. v. 7. and "the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." Gal. ii. 20. But the order of the words in the original is, "Now the just by "faith shall live:" That is, the man who is just or righteous by faith, shall live, be saved or obtain eternal life. That the apostle understood the words in this sense is evident from two other places where he quotes them.

The first is, Rom. i. 16, 17. "For I am not ashamed of "the gospel of Christ—for therein is the righteousness of "God by faith revealed (εις) unto faith: as it is written, "The just by faith shall live." This citation, therefore, must relate to the righteousness of God by faith, which is revealed in the gospel; otherwise it is foreign to the apostle's subject, and could not be brought in as a proof of it. By *the righteousness of God*, I understand God's method of justifying sinners according to the tenor of the new covenant, as afterwards explained in the four succeeding chapters: For after having proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin, and therefore that by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in God's sight, chap. iii. 9, 19, 20. he says, "But now the righte-"ousness of God without the law is manifested, being

witnessed by the law and the prophets," ver. 21. The first testimony which he cites from the prophets is that in Habakkuk already mentioned, Rom. i. 17. The other is from Psal. xxxii. 1, 2. where David describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, as consisting in having his iniquities forgiven, his sins covered, and not imputed, chap. iv. 6—9. For the testimony of the law, or writings of Moses, he refers to Gen. xv. 6. "Abraham believed God, and it "was counted to him for righteousness," Rom. iv. 3.— On this passage he comments throughout the greater part of that chapter, shewing that the reward of Abraham's faith was not reckoned of debt, but of grace; and that he was justified, not working, but believing on him that justifieth the ungodly, having his faith counted to him for righteousness, ver. 4, 5, 9, 10.

The second citation of Habakkuk's words is in Gal. iii. 11. "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight "of God, it is evident; for, the just by faith shall live." Here it is directly opposed to a man's obtaining life, or being justified by the works of the law; and this is farther evident from the next verse, "And the law is not of "faith;" *i. e.* it does not propose FAITH as the means of obtaining life; "but" it saith, "The man that DOTH these "things shall live in them," ver. 12.

If, in both the fore-mentioned passages, the prophet's words are cited to prove that a man is just or righteous by his faith, as opposed to the works of the law, they must undoubtedly bear the same sense in the passage before us, and are a proper introduction to the following discourse about faith and its effects, in which we are expressly told, that without this principle of faith, it is impossible to please God, chap. xi. 6. The man therefore who is just or justified by means of his faith, shall live:

—*but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*] The original is, και εαν ὑποςειληται, "if he draw back," or apostatize, and the words *any man*, are

inserted by the translators. Dr. OWEN says, that the sup-
"plement is well added; for the apostle is not speaking of
"the same persons, but of different persons,—the *just* and
"the *apostate*." I imagine, that the reason for inserting
this supplement was to remove an apparent objection against
the doctrine of the *final perseverance* of the saints; but I
do not think it justifiable to add to the word of God, even
though it were to defend a truth. There is nothing ex-
pressed in the words which intimates that different persons
are intended; but a change of the character and conduct
of the same person is supposed to be possible, "if he draw
back:" And indeed this is supposed in all the cautions
against apostacy throughout this epistle; for if the apostacy
of professed Christians were considered as impossible, cau-
tions and warnings against it would be needless.

Yet the doctrine of the perseverance of the elect is suf-
ficiently supported by scripture. For if God has chosen
them in Christ before the foundation of the world, and pre-
destinated them to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ
to himself, Eph. i. 4, 5.—If Christ has died to redeem them
from the guilt, power, and consequences of sin, ver. 7.
Gal. iii. 13. Tit. ii. 14.—If God has effectually called them
according to his purpose, and they are really washed, jus-
tified, and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and
by the Spirit of God, 2 Tim. i. 9. 1 Cor. vi. 11.—If there
is an inheritance reserved in heaven for them, and they are
kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation,
1 Pet. i. 4, 5.—In fine, if there is an inseparable connection
between their being foreknown, predestinated, called, and
justified, and their being finally glorified, Rom. viii. 28
—31:—Then it is clear that they must persevere in faith
and holiness unto the end, and at last receive the end of
faith, even the salvation of their souls, 1 Pet. i. 9. If the
perseverance of the elect were not sufficiently secured and
provided for in the plan of redemption as an essential
part of it, their salvation, if not altogether impossible, must
rest at least upon a very precarious and uncertain founda-

tion, namely, their own ability instead of the power of God, who alone is able to keep them from falling, Jude ver. 24.

But then it must be observed, that the Scripture doctrine of the perseverance of the elect is one thing, and the particular application of it to the case of individuals is another. No elect person can know that he himself is elected till he believes the gospel, or that he shall persevere unto the end, but while he is actually persevering in faith and holiness. The question is not, whether the elect shall persevere? that being a revealed truth: but the question is, whether he himself be one of that number? This he ought not to take for granted without the testimony of his conscience that he possesses the scripture characters of a true believer. In order to this, he must give diligence to make his calling and election sure, by adding to his faith, courage, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity; for in doing these things he shall never fall, but an entrance shall be ministered to him abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 2 Pet. i. 5—11. Yet it is perfectly consistent with this, and one of the means of his perseverance, that he should keep in view, that "if he draw back, God's soul shall have no pleasure in him:" that is, he shall be rejected and punished.

This answers to the clause in Hab. ii. 4. "Behold, his "soul which is lifted up, is not upright in him." The apostle's words, at first sight, seem to differ much from our present Hebrew copies, and therefore it is thought that the Hebrew has undergone some alteration in this place. Hallett says, "The apostle's own authority, with-"out any other consideration, is sufficient proof to me, that "the reading which he hath chosen, was the true original "reading in the prophet. However, it is proper to ob-"serve, that the Greek and Arabic versions of the prophet "read the text as the apostle does." Pocock maintains, that the Hebrew word *gnuphla*, rendered *lifted up*, signifies

also *he who faints*, as in Isa. li. 20. Jonah iv. 8. and indeed in either sense may be rendered ὑποστειλῆται, his *drawing back* or *apostatizing;* for men apostatize from the faith as well through pride, self-confidence and impatience of spirit, as by fainting under trials and afflictions for the cause of Christ: But faith stands opposed to both these; and so the apostle exhorts the Hebrews, neither to despise the chastening of the Lord nor faint when rebuked of him, ch. xii. 5. He also observes, that *jasher*, among other things, signifies *to please*, and that the LXX. have translated it by the word αρεσκειν, *to please*, in Num. xxiii. 27. So that the passage may be translated as the apostle hath done, "Behold, he who faints" (or draws back,) "shall "not please his (viz. God's) soul. But the just by his faith "shall live." This is the order in which these two clauses stand in the prophecy; but the apostle, without in the least altering the sense, and probably for the sake of subjoining the observation in the following verse, places the first clause last, thus, "But if he draw back, my soul shall "have no pleasure in him."

Ver. 39. *But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.*] By *we* here the apostle includes himself with all true believers, and particularly those of them to whom he writes. But he does not here declare absolutely, that none of those who then professed the faith would ever draw back (εις απολειαν) unto perdition or destruction. He could assure no man of final salvation or the crown, but in the way he was assured of it in his own case, which he describes thus, "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so "fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep "under my body and bring it into subjection; lest that "by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself "should be (αδοκιμος) a disapproved (or rejected) one." 1 Cor. ix. 26, 27. He therefore intends no more in this place than what he had expressed before in chap. vi. 9. where, after having set before them the dreadful con-

sequences of apostacy, to prevent their being cast down and discouraged, he says, "But beloved, we are persuad-
"ed better things of you, and things that accompany sal-
"vation, though we thus speak." So here, after having again spoken the most awful things on that subject, he concludes with expressing his charitable persuasion and hope respecting them, that they were not of those who draw back from the faith unto their destruction; but of those who would continue to believe, so as to obtain the salvation of the soul.

CHAP. XI.

CONTENTS AND SCOPE.

In the latter end of the foregoing chapter, the apostle having reminded the Hebrews of their former fortitude, patience, and joy under sufferings for Christ, and encouraged them to persevere in that state of mind under their present trials, by referring them to a passage in Hab. ii. 3, 4. where it is said, "The just by faith shall live," he, in this eleventh chapter, illustrates that saying by a number of examples from the Old Testament of persons, who, by faith and hope in God and his promises, had triumphed both over all the allurements and terrors of the world.

He begins with an account of the nature of faith in general, and describes it to be "the confidence "of things hoped for, the conviction of things not "seen," ver. 1.—That by this faith the ancient saints obtained a testimony of God's approbation, ver. 2.—And that it is by faith in divine revelation we understand that the worlds were framed by God's word of command; so that the things which are seen were not made of the things which did appear, ver. 3.

As examples of this faith and its practical influence, he mentions among the antediluvians, Abel, Enoch, and Noah, ver. 4, 5, 6, 7.—Next he

takes notice of the renowned ancestors of the Hebrews, such as Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and their lawgiver Moses; and represents their faith not only as a belief of the promise of the land of Canaan, but of the resurrection of the dead and heavenly country, ver. 8—28.—He mentions the faith of Israel in passing through the Red Sea, and also in compassing Jericho seven days in the firm belief that its walls would fall by a miracle; and that the faith of the harlot Rahab saved her from perishing with the unbelievers when Jericho was taken, ver. 29, 30, 31.—He likewise mentions some of the Israelitish judges, kings, and prophets who were remarkable for their faith, such as Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets. But because it would be tedious to speak of them all, or of every individual particularly, he introduces them in one group, and in an elevated strain, celebrates their fortitude, victories, works of righteousness, deliverances, and rewards, all which he ascribes to the influence of their faith, ver. 32, 33, 34.—With equal rapture does he speak of the reproaches, afflictions, persecutions, tortures, and deaths which others afterwards endured for the sake of a good conscience towards God; so that they were as illustrious for their passive, as others were for their active virtues; while it is evident, that nothing could support them under such severe trials, but that faith which is the conviction of

things hoped for in a future state, ver. 35, 36, 37, 38.

The apostle concludes this animated discourse by observing, that all these Old Testament worthies, having received an honourable testimony by faith, did not in this life receive the accomplishment of the promise respecting Christ and the good things to come, God having in prospect something better for us Christians, that they without us should not be made perfect, ver. 39, 40.

PARAPHRASE.

CHAP. XI. 1. Now faith, *by which the just live,* is the confidence of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

2. For by it the ancients obtained a *good* testimony.

3. By faith *in divine revelation* we understand that the worlds were produced by the word of God, *commanding them to be,* so that the things which are seen, were not made of things which *did* appear.

4. By faith Abel offered to God a more *acceptable* sacrifice than Cain *did, bringing not only a meat but a sin-offering,* by which he obtained a testimony that he was righteous, God testifying *this* upon his gifts, and by this, he, being dead, yet speaketh.

5. By faith Enoch, *the seventh from Adam,* was

translated, that he might not see death, and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation it was testified, that he pleased God *by walking with him.*

6. But without faith *it is* impossible to please *God;* for he that approaches to God, *so as to worship him acceptably,* must believe that he is, and *that he* is a rewarder of them who diligently seek him.

7. By faith Noah, being divinely warned concerning things not as yet seen, moved with *pious* fear, prepared an ark for the salvation of his family *from the deluge,* by which he condemned the *unbelieving* world; and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

8. By faith *in the divine promises,* Abraham being called to go out *from his kindred and native country,* unto a place which he was afterwards to receive for an inheritance, *implicitly* obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he was going.

9. By faith he sojourned in *Canaan* the land of promise, as *in* a strange land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the co-heirs of the same promise.

10. For he expected the *heavenly* city, of which the planner and architect *is* God.

11. By faith even Sarah herself, *who was barren,* received ability for the conception of seed, and *when* past the time of age brought forth *a child,* because she judged him faithful who had promised *her a son.*

12. Therefore there sprang even from one, and *he* in these *respects* become dead, *a race* as the stars of heaven in multitude, and as the sand which is on the shore of the sea, innumerable.

13. All these died in faith, not having received *the accomplishment of* the promises; but seeing them afar off, and being persuaded *of them*, and embracing *them*, *they* confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

14. For they who say such things, declare plainly that they *earnestly* seek *their* native country.

15. And if indeed they had been mindful of *Chaldea*, that *country* from which they came out, they might have had an opportunity to return to it.

16. But now they *eagerly* desire a better *country than any on earth*, that is, an heavenly *one*: therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared a city for them, *even the new Jerusalem.*

17. By faith Abraham, when tried, offered up Isaac; yea he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten *son:*

18. Concerning whom it had been said, "That "in Isaac shall thy seed be called;"

19. Accounting that, *although he were burnt to ashes*, God was able to raise *him* up even from the dead; from whence also he did receive him in a figure.

20. By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

21. By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and *worshipping God*, bowed down upon the top of his staff.

22. By faith Joseph, approaching his end, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel *out of Egypt*, and gave charge concerning his bones.

23. By faith Moses, when born, was hid three months by his parents, because they saw the child *remarkably* beautiful, and they feared not the command of the king, *to destroy the male children.*

24. By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter *who had adopted him;*

25. Choosing rather to be evil-treated with the people of God, than to have a temporary enjoyment *of the pleasures* of sin.

26. Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he looked off *from these* to the recompence of reward *in a future state.*

27. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he boldly persisted as seeing the invisible *God under whom he acted.*

28. By faith he appointed the passover and the pouring out of the blood, that he who destroyed the first-born *of the Egyptians* might not touch theirs.

29. By faith they passed through the Red Sea, as by dry *land*, of which the Egyptians taking trial, were swallowed up.

30. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, having been encompassed seven days.

31. By faith Rahab the harlot was not destroyed with the unbelievers, having received the spies in peace *and concealed them.*

32. And what shall I say more? for the time would fail me to give a narration concerning Gideon, and Barak, and Sampson, and Jephtha, and David, and Samuel, and the prophets;

33. Who through faith vanquished kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

34. Extinguished the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong from weakness, became mighty in battle, routed the camps of the aliens.

35. Women received their dead *children* by a resurrection; but others were tortured, not accepting deliverance *by sinful compliances,* that they might obtain a better resurrection.

36. And others had trials of mockery and scourgings, and moreover of bonds and imprisonment.

37. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they died by the slaughter of the sword, they went about clothed in sheep and in goat skins, being *persons* destitute, afflicted, *and in all respects* mal-treated;

38. Of whom the world was not worthy: They wandered in deserts, and mountains, and *lurked* in dens and caves of the earth.

39. Now all these, having obtained a *good* testimony on account of faith; received not *the accomplishment of* the promise *in this life*;

40. God having provided (Gr. *foreseen)* something better for us, that without us they should not be made perfect.

COMMENTARY AND NOTES ON CHAP. XI.

Ver. 1. *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*] If the original word πιςις signifies *faith* or *belief*, I do not see how it can properly be termed either the *substance* or *evidence* of things. Though it is essential to faith to have an object, real or imaginary, without which it cannot exist, as in that case nothing is believed; yet belief is not the *substance* of its object; and though evidence is also essential to faith, without which it would be mere irrational credulity; yet belief is not evidence, but the effect of perceiving it. We shall therefore enquire a little into the scripture sense of these two words.

As to ὑποςασις, though *substance* may nearly express its etymology; yet its use in the sacred scriptures is chiefly to be consulted. The English word *substance* occurs about sixty times throughout our translation, but in none of them does it signify faith, nor is the original word ὑποςασις, but in general ὑπαςξις or ὑπαρχονλα, which signify a man's worldly goods or substance. The LXX. frequently use ὑποςασις to express *confidence* or *confidence of expectation*, Ruth i. 12. Psal. xxxix. 7. Ezek. xix. 5. In the New Testament it is used five times, and that only by our apostle: In three of which it is translated *confidence*, viz. in 2 Cor. ix. 4. xi. 17. Heb. iii. 14. and in this place it is so translated in the margin.

With respect to ελεγχος, though in classical Greek it often signifies the evidence, proof, or demonstration of a thing; yet it is never translated *evidence* in all the Old Testament, and the word which is eight times so translated, is not ελεγχος but βιβλιον, which signifies a *book* or *roll*, Jer. xxxii. 10, 11, 14, 16, 44. In the New Testament ελεγχος occurs only twice; first in 2 Tim. iii. 16. where it is translated *reproof*, but without any necessity, as the scripture is certainly profitable for *conviction*. The other place where this word occurs is in the passage under consideration; and what else can it mean in a definition of faith, but a firm *conviction* of mind which is the effect of evidence? And this best agrees with the sense of the verb ελεγχω, which is commonly translated *to convince*, as in John viii. 9. Acts xviii. 28. 1 Cor. xiv. 24. Tit. i. 9. James ii. 9. Jude ver. 15. as it should also be in John xvi. 8. 2 Tim. iv. 2. Faith or belief is a simple idea, and cannot be defined but by synonimous terms connected with its object, such as credence; giving credit to a thing testified on the veracity of the testifier; an assent of the mind to the truth or reality of something which is made known to us only by testimony or report. But no terms can more accurately express the nature of belief than those used by the apostle, namely, the *confidence* and *conviction* of the mind respecting the truth of divine revelation.

The *credenda* or *objects* of faith he describes as consisting of (ελπιζομενων) *things hoped for*, and of (πραγμαΐων ȣ βλεπομενων) *things not seen*. *Things hoped for* must be future good things revealed and promised; and confidence as to such things must be a confidence of persuasion, founded on God's faithfulness and power, that what he hath promised he will certainly perform, for it is explained thus,—a being *persuaded* of the promises, ver. 13.—a *judging him faithful* who hath promised, ver. 11.—a being *fully persuaded*, that what he had promised he was able to perform, Rom. iv. 21. This *confidence* of faith

in divine promises is inseparable from hope; for it is the confidence of things hoped for, and is said to be *believing in hope*, Rom. iv. 18. viz. of obtaining the good things promised.

Again, faith is the conviction *of things not seen.* Things not seen include not only things promised, but things testified, John iii. 13. 2 Thess. i. 10; not only good things to be hoped for, but evil things to be dreaded, Heb. xi. 7; not merely things future, but things past and present, ch. iii. 6. All of them, however, so far as they are the objects of faith, must be *things not seen;* for faith is opposed to sight, 2 Cor. v. 7. Whatever we know by sensation, the deductions of reason, or by experience, is not properly speaking the object of faith, which is a conviction of the truth and certainty of things that are knowable only by revelation, and is grounded on the authority of that revelation, considered as the word of God.

Yet Revelation does not set aside or contradict any true information which we receive from nature, reason, or experience, but rather supposes and confirms it; but then it reveals things which could not be known in any of these ways, and these, strictly speaking, are the objects of faith. And though these objects are not discoverable by our senses or natural reason, yet when discovered by divine revelation, nothing can be more reasonable than to believe them. When God discovers himself to be the speaker, his character and perfections afford the highest reasons for giving the most unlimited credit to every thing he says, however far it may transcend our natural conceptions, or the established course of nature. So that faith and right reason must ever agree.

The definition of faith given in this verse, and exemplified in the various instances following, cannot well be restricted to justifying faith, which particularly respects Christ as its object, and has the promise of eternal life. But in this definition no mention is made of Christ as the object of faith, and in several of the following instances,

temporal blessings only are mentioned. I am therefore of opinion, that faith here must be understood in its most general and extensive sense, namely, a firm belief or confidence, grounded on the character of God, as to the truth of whatever he is pleased to reveal or declare, whether relating to spiritual or temporal things. Under this general description justifying faith must be included; for if men believe solely upon God's authority whatever he is pleased to reveal concerning things in general, they must surely believe upon the same authority what he has from the beginning revealed concerning Christ in particular, so far as it is made known to them either by promises, prophecies or types. And though several of the instances mentioned should have no immediate or direct reference to Christ; yet they are all so many proofs and evidences of the power and efficacy of faith in God and of its extensive exercise in a course of dependence upon, and of obedience to him, amidst all difficulties and dangers of every kind. Now this faith was highly approved of God;

Ver. 2. *For by it the elders obtained a good report.*] *Elders* here do not signify persons in office, but the ancients, or those who lived in ancient times, and who are afterwards mentioned. These, on account of their faith, εμαρτυρηθησαν, "obtained a good report;" so this word is also translated in Acts vi. 3. and x. 32. God testified his acceptance of their faith with its fruits, and caused it to be recorded in his word, to transmit their example and perpetuate their honour to all succeeding generations.

Ver. 3. *By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God;—*] The original τους αιωνας, literally signifies *the ages;* but the succeeding clause shews that it here signifies the material fabric of the worlds, being termed "the things which are seen." The worlds comprehend the sun, moon, stars, and this earth, called by Moses "the heavens and the earth." Gen. i. 1. These were *framed*; the original is καταρτισθαι, which

signifies were prepared, fitted up, and, like the different parts of a machine, set in their proper place and order. The first exertion of God's power in the material creation was his creating out of nothing the matter or substance of things, which was a confused fluid mass or chaos, void of light, form or order, and by Moses is called *the deep*, Gen. i. 2. The succeeding work of the six days was his bringing all things into their present form, beauty and order, out of the dark unseen mass. All this was effected "by the word of God," that is, his word of command, saying, Let it be, and it was, Gen. i. 3, 7, 9, &c. "For he "spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood "fast." Psal. xxxiii. 6, 9. God indeed made all things by the divine person of the LOGOS, who was in the beginning with God, and was God, John i. 1, 2; but the word here used is ῥημα, which never signifies the person of Christ, but a word uttered or spoken, though it appears that it was by his Son that God spoke the worlds into existence and order both as to matter and form;

—*so that the things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear.*] The τα βλεπομενα, "things which are "seen," are the materials which compose the visible universe. These "were not made of things which do (or "rather *did*) appear." Some render the words, were "made of things which do not appear," *i. e.* by the invisible things of God, his eternal power and Godhead, Rom. i. 20. But, as Dr. OWEN observes, φαινομενων seems rather to respect the *material* than *efficient* cause, and signifies the conformed materials of the chaos, which, when created, did not at first appear, because "darkness "was upon the face of the deep." Gen. i. 2. PEIRCE and MACKNIGHT understand the apostle to mean, that the things which are seen were not made of things which *did exist, i. e.* of any pre-existent matter to form them of. But though this is a truth in one sense, yet I am not clear that it is what the apostle means; for it makes the *appearance* and *existence* of things to be the same; whereas we

know that things might exist, though they did not appear. However, the difference is not very material, as they agree that the original matter, as well as form and order of the universe, was created or brought into existence by the word of God.

It will probably be asked, if it is by faith in revelation we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, how could the Gentiles, who had not that revelation, understand by the things which are made, the eternal power and Godhead of their maker, as our apostle affirms, Rom. i. 20? To this it may be answered, that these things are perfectly consistent; for the same truth that may be known in some degree by reason and observation, may be more fully and certainly known by revelation, and so become a matter of faith. Thus though it be partly evident to reason by the things which are made, that the Maker of them is possessed of eternal power and Godhead; yet that truth, being expressly and clearly revealed in Scripture, and believed upon the authority of God, is then understood by faith, which is, "the conviction of things not "seen." That the worlds *exist* we know by our senses: That they were originally *made* is obvious to our reason; but that they were made by the *word* of God, and that out of nothing, could be known only by revelation, and understood by faith. Accordingly, many of the heathen philosophers, who had limited notions of the power of God, and were ignorant of the scripture account of creation, imagined, that the matter of which the worlds are composed is self-existent and eternal.

Ver. 4. *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain*—] It is observed by critics, that the word πλειονα in the comparative degree, signifies more in number rather than in value. Cain offered "the fruit "of the ground," which was only the *mincha*, or meat-offering, but no proper sacrifice for sin, Gen. iv. 3. Whereas Abel (besides the fruit of the ground, which was one of his *gifts*,) "also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and

"of the fat thereof;" which was a sin-offering, and by these he shewed both his sense of the divine bounty and of his own sinfulness. And as he did this *by faith*, he must have had a revelation of the will of God respecting the appointment of sacrifices as a prefiguration of the manner in which the promised Seed of the woman was to bruise the serpent's head, viz. by the sacrifice of himself, Gen. iii. 15. Heb. ii. 14, 15.

—*by which he obtained witness that he was righteous,*—] That is, by means of his sacrifice as offered in faith, he obtained a testimony that he was righteous, and that both he and his offering were accepted of God; for it is recorded, that "the Lord had respect to Abel, and to his offer-"ing," Gen. iv. 4. which is equivalent to a declaration that he was righteous.

—*God testifying of his gifts,*—] God testified his acceptance of Abel's gifts. It is not said in what manner. It might either be in words, or by some outward visible sign, such as causing fire to come down from heaven upon his sacrifice, as was done in after times upon particular occasions, Gen. xv. 17. Lev. ix. 24. 1 Kings xviii. 38.

—*and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh.*] By that example of his faith and acceptance, as recorded in the word of God, though he has been dead many years ago, he still speaketh, instructing us, that God has from the beginning had respect to the service of faith, and that it is only through faith in the atonement of Christ that sinners are made righteous and accepted of him. As Abel's sacrifice prefigured the sacrifice of Christ, which had been previously intimated in the original promise, so his faith in offering it was "the conviction of things hoped for."

Ver. 5. *By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him:*—] The words referred to, are in Gen. v. 24. "And Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God "took him." The apostle agrees with the LXX.'s translation of this passage, and has it, "he was not found," viz.

on earth; which intimates that search was made for him by the men of that generation, as was afterwards made for Elijah on a like occasion. 2 Kings ii. 17. But he could not be found; and the reason given is, "for God took him," or as the LXX. and the apostle express it, because "God had translated him," *i. e.* taken him both soul and body up into heaven, "that he should not see death," as the apostle explains it. So the Jews understood Moses' account of this matter, as is evident from several passages in the Apocrypha. See Wisd. iv. 10. Ecclus. xliv. 16. xlix. 14. But as flesh and blood, in its present corruptible state, cannot inherit the heavenly kingdom, 1 Cor. xv. 50, 51. so his body must have been changed in his translation, or divested of all its gross corruptible qualities, like the bodies of the saints who shall be alive and remain at Christ's second coming. The apostle having said that it was *by faith* he was translated, proves it thus: —*for before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God.*] The testimony referred to is this, "Enoch "walked with God," Gen. v. 24. which the apostle, agreeably to the LXX. renders "he pleased God." That is, he walked in a constant course of strict piety and holy obedience to God, so as to please him, or obtain his approbation; and it may also include his being a zealous maintainer of the faith and worship of the true God, a reprover of wickedness, and a preacher of righteousness among the antediluvians; for we are informed that he was a prophet, and warned them of the Lord's coming to execute judgment upon the ungodly, Jude ver. 14, 15. Now from this testimony "that he pleased God," the apostle infers his faith.

Ver. 6. *But without faith* it is *impossible to please* him: *for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and* that *he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*] There can scarcely be a more self-evident proposition than what the apostle here lays down, viz. That "without faith it is "impossible to please God;" and that whether we consi-

der this impossibility to relate to our *serving* God, or to God's being *pleased* with our services. Without faith it is impossible for us to serve and worship God aright, or indeed at all; for if we believe not *that he is*, our services cannot possibly have any respect to him; and though we should in general admit his existence, yet if we believe not that *he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him*, we can have no proper inducement to serve him, but must consider it to be vain and unprofitable, as the wicked do, Job xxi. 15. xxxiv. 9. Mal. iii. 14. Without faith it is not possible that any thing we do can be pleasing or acceptable to God, because it can have no regard to his will, authority, or the enjoyment of his favour, who "taketh pleasure "only in them that fear him, in those that hope in his "mercy." Psal. cxlvii. 11. This chiefly confutes two absurd tenets which some have adopted: One is, "That "it is of no consequence what men believe, if they live "well;" which is equivalent to saying, that it is of no consequence to please God; for the apostle affirms, that without faith it is impossible to please him. The other is, "That in serving God we ought to have no respect to the recompence of reward;" whereas the apostle affirms, that faith is a belief not only that God is, but that he is "a re-"warder of them that diligently seek him," and that without this faith we cannot please him. This account of faith illustrates both parts of the definition given of it in ver. 1. The belief that God is, is the confidence of things not seen; and a belief that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, is the conviction of things hoped for.

Some are of opinion that the apostle is here only describing what they call the *heathen's creed*; and allege, that many of the heathen who had no supernatural revelation, believed that God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him; which, they think, are nothing more than the principles of natural religion, and the dictates of unassisted reason. Hence, it is argued, that as Enoch was saved by that faith, so were they, if, like him, they walked suitably to their belief.

But the premises are in a great measure false, and the conclusion altogether uncertain, and quite foreign to the scope and design of the whole context. With regard to the first article of this faith, viz. *that God is,* the apostle admits, that the Gentiles had such a display of his eternal power and Godhead by the things that are made, as to leave them quite inexcusable in their absurd idolatry, Rom. i. 19, 20.; yet he never supposes that unassisted nature, or reason, in its present state of depravity, could, without revelation, attain the true and saving knowledge, and belief of the being and perfections of God. On the contrary, he declares, that "the world, by wisdom, knew not God," 1 Cor. i. 21. but did service unto them, "which, by nature, are no gods," Gal. iv. 8. Nay, they knew not that there was but *one* only, the living and true God, for they had gods many, and lords many, 1 Cor. viii. 5. It appears to me, therefore, that by a belief *that God is,* the apostle does not merely mean a general belief that there exists a first intelligent cause of all things, but a belief of the being and perfections of the one only true God in distinction from all idols, according to the revelation he hath made of himself in his word. With respect to the other article of this faith, viz. *that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him,* it is evident, that however consonant it is to reason, to believe that God will reward innocent creatures who serve him diligently, yet reason can never discover, with any degree of certainty, that he will be reconciled to such as have rebelled against him, as all mankind have; far less that he will accept their services, and *reward* them with eternal life. Our self-love, and fond hopes may suggest this; but the voice of nature and reason are uncertain, if not altogether silent upon the subject; and accordingly we find, that a future state of rewards or punishments was a matter of dispute and uncertainty among heathen philosophers, and some of them absolutely denied it. The real belief of this article, therefore, must be founded entirely upon this revelation, or the divine pro-

mise. This promise of eternal life, which is the reward, is spoken of through a great part of this chapter, and is shewn to be the ground of the ancient saints' faith of the heavenly reward, see verses 13, 39. And as God, who cannot lie, made this promise of eternal life before the times of ages, 1 Tit. i. 2. or upon the very back of the fall, it must have been revealed to Enoch, and believed by him, as it was by all the faithful in after ages. Farther, as this promise was founded upon the promise respecting Christ, through whom it was to be accomplished, so the faith of it must also have had a respect to him and his work, according to the measure of revelation then given; and that Enoch had the revelation of the Messiah to come, we cannot doubt, whether we consider his acquaintance with the first promise, Gen. iii. 15. or his being a prophet, who foretold not only the judgment impending over the antediluvians, but, as would seem, the coming of the Lord Jesus to execute judgment upon the despisers of the gospel at the last day, Jude, ver. 14, 15. From the whole, therefore, it is evident that the apostle is not speaking of the heathen creed founded merely on the light of reason, but of a belief of divine revelation. And, therefore, to ground the salvation of honest heathens who have no revelation, upon this text, is altogether absurd. We leave heathens to the Judge of all the earth, who certainly will do right; but nothing can be more contrary to the drift of the apostle, than to suppose him telling the Hebrews, that men whose faith has no respect to revelation or the gospel, may obtain eternal life, which would make all he had said to them, in this epistle, of little consequence.

Ver. 7. *By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house;*] Noah was (χρηματισθεις) warned or admonished, viz. by divine revelation, of *things not seen as yet*, particularly of the coming deluge (see Gen. vi. 12—18), which was 120 years before it happened. He gave full credit to the divine threatening by that faith which is

the *conviction of things not seen.* This is evident from the effects of his faith; for by his faith in the divine threatening, he was *moved with fear;* not desponding or discouraging fear, but such as was necessary to quicken him to provide in earnest for his safety, according to the command and direction of God; it moved him to prepare an ark for the saving of his house, and which he believed would be effectual for that purpose. Thus, we see that faith regards God's threatenings as well as promises, and apprehends the revealed motives of fear as well as hope, so as to set us about the use of such means of safety as God hath appointed, believing they will answer the end.

—*by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.*]—*By which,* i. e. by which faith in the divine threatening, which moved his fear and led him to prepare the ark, and by his preaching of righteousness, (2 Pet. iii. 5.) whereby he gave sufficient warning to that generation, *he condemned the world;* i. e. he left them without excuse, aggravated their guilt, and so vindicated the justice of God in destroying them; *and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.* As the salvation of Noah and his house by the ark, was a type of spiritual and everlasting salvation by Christ, 1 Pet. iii. 21. so it was a pledge to him of his being justified by faith in the promised Messiah, and of his being made an heir according to the hope of eternal life, Tit. iii. 7.; for nothing less seems to come up to the import of the expression here used, viz. *heir of the righteousness which is by faith,* see Rom. iii. 21. ch. iv. 13. Phil. iii. 9.

Infidels have objected to the size of Noah's ark, as being altogether unable to contain the number of animals which must have been in it.

But when we consider that the ark was in length 300 cubits, or 450 feet—in breadth, 50 cubits, or 75 feet—in height, 30 cubits, or 45 feet, and that it consisted of three decks or storeys;—when we also consider that there has not yet been found above 100 sorts of beasts, nor above

200 sorts of birds, we shall find abundant room for them all, as well as for their provision during the time they were in the ark.

Ver. 8. *By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed*—] The *call* here referred to is that of which we have an account in Gen. xii. 1—4.; and though it is there placed after Abraham left Ur of the Chaldeans, yet it was given him before, and was the cause of his leaving that place, as Stephen informs us, "The God of Glory "appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Me-"sopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, and said unto "him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, "and come into the land which I shall shew thee." Acts vii. 2, 3.—*He was called to go out*, viz. from his country, kindred, and father's house, Gen. xii. 1, Acts vii. 3.—*into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance.* These are the words of the apostle anticipating the promise, and interpreting the Lord's design; for it does not appear that the Lord had expressly promised to give Abraham and his seed the land of Canaan for an inheritance, till he had actually arrived at that country, see Gen. xii. 7. But he at first promised to make of him a great nation, to bless him; and that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed, Gen. xii. 2, 3. Abraham believed these divine promises with that faith which "is the confidence of things hoped for," and this belief led him implicitly to *obey* the divine call; for it is added,

—*and he went out, not knowing whither he went*—] When the Lord first called him, he said unto him, "Get thee out, into a land that I will shew thee;" but it does not appear that he either told him what land it was, or where it lay; yet Abraham went out in obedience to the divine call; and as he knew not whither he went, he gave himself wholly up to the guidance of him that called him, implicitly following his direction, confident that he would bring him to the land in safety, and shew it to him as

he had promised. This was a most remarkable instance of faith.

Ver. 9. *By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.*—] When Abraham came into the land of Canaan, the unknown place which God was to shew him, the Lord promised to give it for an inheritance to him and his seed; hence, it is called *the land of promise*, Gen. xii. 7. But he did not enter into the possession of it, nor did his posterity inherit it, for near 500 years after. Stephen says, "he gave him no inheritance in it, no, not so much as to "set his foot on; yet he promised that he would give it to "him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as "yet he had no child." Acts vii. 5. This promise he believed, and *by faith* in it, *sojourned in the land of promise;* not in a fixed habitation, like a native, or possessor of the land, but wandered about from place to place like a stranger, and dwelling in moveable tents with his son Isaac, and his grandson Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for the promise included his seed, Gen. xii. 7. and was also renewed to Isaac, Gen. xxvi. 3. and to Jacob, ch. xxviii. 13. But it is evident that Abraham understood more in this promise than the earthly possession of Canaan's land:

Ver. 10. *For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*—] By this *city* is meant heaven, for it is explained to be a city which God had prepared for them in a better country, that is, an heavenly, verse 16. As the heavenly inheritance was typified by the land of promise, so the residence of the saints there is represented as in a city which is the antitype of the earthly Jerusalem, and where God dwells in the midst of them; and so it is called the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, ch. xii. 22—the Jerusalem that is above, Gal. iv. 26; see it described, Rev. xxi. It is here termed *a city that hath foundations*, in opposition to the

moveable tabernacles wherein Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, dwelt, during the time of their sojourning in the land of Canaan; and to set forth its fixed, stable, and durable nature. The *builder and maker*, or preparer of this city, *is God;* by this it is opposed to all the cities in this world, which are built by men's hands. In like manner, the same apostle distinguishes the heavenly sanctuary from the earthly, by its being *made without hands*, Heb. ix. 11; and the heavenly mansion, or resurrection body, from the earthly house of this tabernacle, by its being "a *building* "*of God*, an house *not made with hands*, eternal in the "heavens," 2 Cor. v. 1. It is plain, therefore, from the connection of this with the foregoing verse, that Abraham was reconciled to his sojourning state, without inheritance or fixed habitation in this world, by the faith of a future state of blessedness in the world to come. The ground of this faith shall be afterwards enquired into.

Ver. 11. *Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.*—] The Lord promised to Abraham that Sarah, his wife, should bear him a son, Gen xvii. 15—22. This promise was afterwards repeated in the hearing of Sarah, who laughed at it within herself as a thing incredible, considering the great age of herself and of Abraham; and afterwards, through fear, denied that she did laugh, so that she was guilty both of unbelief and falsehood. But when she found that the angel had discovered her laughing within herself in secret, and had detected the hidden reasonings of her heart; when she heard him put the silencing question, Is there any thing too hard for the Lord? and give fresh assurances that she should have a son, Gen. xviii. 13, 14. then she perceived that it was the word of the Lord, who was able to perform it, however far beyond the ordinary course of nature; and so she no more laughed at the promise, but believed it, as the apostle informs us, judging him faithful who had promised. It

was through this belief of the Lord's power, and faithfulness to his promise, that she received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, she being then 90, and Abraham 100 years old.

Ver. 12. *Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea-shore innumerable*--] The original (διο και) may be rendered *therefore also;* and this seems to be the sense, for it refers not only to Sarah's faith, but also to Abraham's, who likewise believed the promise; and that not merely that he should have one son by Sarah, viz. Isaac, as mentioned above, but that he should be the father of many nations, or of an innumerable seed: see Gen. xv. 5, 6. chap. xvii. 4, 5. Rom. iv. 17, 18, 19. *Therefore also*, not only through Sarah's but Abraham's faith, *sprang there of one*, viz. Abraham, *and him as good as dead*, not only Isaac, but *so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea-shore innumerable;* for so the Lord had promised, Gen. xiii. 16. ch. xv. 5. and he believed according to that which was spoken, ver. 6. Rom. iv. 18.

To enhance Abraham's faith in this promise, the apostle takes notice of the difficulties which it surmounted. Sarah had been hitherto barren, and was now 90 years old, and so, long past the ordinary time of child-bearing. He himself was 100 years of age, and, as the apostle says, *as good as dead*, or rather (και ταυτα νενεκρωμενυ) *dead as to these things*, viz. which related to his being a father. These considerations might at first stagger him a little, as seems intimated, Gen. xvii. 17. but whatever be in this, it is evident that his faith overcame these difficulties; for the apostle says, that "being not weak in faith, he considered "not his own body now dead, when he was about an hun-"dred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbe-"lief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. And "being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was

"able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to "him for righteousness." Rom. iv. 19—23. Abraham's faith had no dependence on the natural influence of second causes, but rested solely upon the power and faithfulness of God, "who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those "things which are not as though they were." Thus "against hope, (or all human probability) he believed in "hope, that he might become the father of many nations, "according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed "be." Rom. iv. 17, 18. This, therefore, was a most remarkable instance of Abraham's faith.

Ver. 13. *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*] By *these all* he does not mean all he had mentioned from the beginning of the chapter; for Enoch did not die at all; and though Abel and Noah died in faith, yet it cannot be said of them, "if they had been mindful of the country "from whence they came out, they might have had op-"portunity to have returned," as is affirmed of all those here intended, ver 15. He, therefore, only intends the persons last mentioned who sojourned in the land of Canaan, viz. Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob.

They *died in faith*, i. e. they continued in the faith to the end of their lives, and left this world in the firm belief of the good things promised. *Not having received the promises*, i. e. not having received the accomplishment of the promises during their lifetime in this world. The *promises* here mentioned in the plural, are temporal and spiritual promises, but chiefly the latter. The promises of multiplying Abraham's natural seed, and of giving them the land of Canaan for an inheritance, were not accomplished during the lifetime of the above-mentioned Patriarchs, though the first of them had a begun accomplishment.—The promises of Christ, the notable seed; of blessing all nations in him, and of the heavenly inheri-

tance; were not fulfilled in their day. Their faith had a respect to both these kinds of promises, and to the former as types and pledges of the latter; yet they received the accomplishment of neither of them in this life:—*but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them*, they did not expect to receive the accomplishment of these promises in this life; and so were not disappointed at their death; but they saw them afar off by that faith which "is the confidence of things hoped "for," believing that they would certainly be accomplished in their proper time at a distant period, and the most valuable of them in another life. The clause, *and were persuaded of them*, though most agreeable to the sense of the apostle, and clearly implied, is not to be found in the most, or best of the original manuscripts, or in any of the old versions, or ancient commentators; and is, therefore, thought by many, to have been added long since this epistle was written—*and embraced them.* The word (ασπασαμενοι) imports to *greet*, *salute*, or *embrace*, and here it imports, that they not only were persuaded of the *truth* and *certainty* of the promises, but saw the *goodness* of the things promised, so as to excite their desire, esteem, and affection, as worthy of all acceptation; and consequently to embrace and cleave to them in their hearts as the objects of their love and delight.—This is always inseparable from that faith which is the confidence of things hoped for.—*and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.* Abraham confessed this to the sons of Heth, when he wanted only to have the possession of a burial-place for his dead, "I am a stranger and a sojourner with you," Gen. xxiii. 4. Jacob confessed the same to Pharaoh, and called his whole life a *pilgrimage;* "The days of the "years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty;" and he calls the life of his fathers, Abraham and Isaac, also a *pilgrimage*, Gen. xlvii. 9. This confession does not mainly signify that they were in a wandering state, and had not obtained the possession of the earthly inheritance as yet;

for long after Israel had gotten that possession, the same confession is made by the Psalmist, "I am a stranger with "thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were," Psal. xxxix. 12. and cxix. 19.—Nor was this peculiar to David, for he uses the same confession with regard to the church of Israel, "We are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers," 1 Chron. xxix. 15; and in the law the Lord gives this reason why they should not sell their possessions for ever, "For the land is mine, for ye are stran-"gers and sojourners with me," Lev. xxv. 23. The Lord claims the land as his own, hence it is callad *the Lord's land*, Hos. ix. 3.—*Emmanuel's land*, Isa. viii. 8.—the *Holy Land*, Zech. ii. 12. He had sanctified it, and given it freely for a possession to his church as a type of the heavenly inheritance, and therefore they were not to sell it for ever like profane Esau; but that they might not take up with it as their only inheritance, he adds, "for ye are stran-"gers and sojourners with me." This is a reason both why they should not sell it, for strangers and sojourners have no right to sell the land which is only given them to dwell in; and it is also a reason why they should not take up with the land of Canaan as the main thing intended in the promise, seeing they were but strangers and sojourners in it; which might lead them to look for the true rest which remains for the people of God, of which the other was but an imperfect type. When, therefore, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, confessed themselves strangers and pilgrims on the earth, it was not merely because they had not obtained the earthly possession; for their posterity were strangers and sojourners even after they had entered into that possession. But the apostle explains the import of this confession as follows:—

Ver. 14. *For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country*—] They who confess themselves strangers and pilgrims on the earth, by this plainly declare that they seek a country not on earth. The word (πατρίδα) rendered *country*, does not signify a country in general,

but such a country as a man's father dwells in, and possesses rightfully as his own, and wherein his children have a right to dwell with him. Thus it is strictly opposed to a strange or foreign country. So their confessing themselves strangers and pilgrims on the earth, shews that they did not look upon any place on earth as their father's country, where they would be no more strangers and pilgrims; but that they sought a father's country elsewhere. That it was not their earthly father's country in Chaldea from whence they had come out they were seeking, is plain from the next verse.

Ver. 15. *And truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out they might have had opportunity to have returned*—] The country of their father Terah was Chaldea, and had this been the paternal country which they sought, they might easily have returned to it; but they did not desire this country, nor so much as bear it in mind. And what is the plain inference from all this? The apostle gives it in the following words:

Ver. 16. *But now they desire a better country*—] viz. than either the land of Canaan where they sojourned as strangers and pilgrims, or their father's country, Chaldea, from whence they had come out at the divine call; and —*that is, an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city*—] This explains the whole matter. The (πατρίδα) father's country they sought and desired, is an heavenly, where their God and Father dwells. This is the inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away. There their Father's house is, and there he hath prepared for them a city of habitation, where they shall dwell for ever with him, not as strangers and sojourners as they were with him in the land of Canaan, but as his sons and heirs. This is the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. See note on ver. 10.

When the apostle says, "Wherefore God is not asham-"ed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for

"them a city," it imports, that he would not have styled himself their God, if he had not prepared it for them; and consequently, that his calling himself the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, is a full proof that he hath prepared the heavenly city for them to dwell in for ever, and a sufficient reason why they should look for that city. For to be *their God* does not signify that common relation wherein he stands to all his creatures, but that special and peculiar relation wherein he stands to his people, and is equivalent to his being their *Father;* and consequently his conferring upon them such an inheritance and city as becomes his children and heirs.

Ver. 17. *By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises, offered up his only begotten son;*

Ver. 18. *Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called*:—] The command which God gave to Abraham to offer up his son, is called *tempting* or *trying* him. The word is used both in a good and bad sense, but when it is attributed to God it must ever be understood in a good sense; therefore, James says, "Let no man say "when he is tempted," viz. to commit sin, "I am tempt-"ed of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, nei-"ther tempteth he any man," i. e. to do evil, Jam. i. 13. He neither deceives any man's judgment, nor perverts his will, nor corrupts his affections, nor does any thing else that can charge him with the blame of men's sins. In Abraham's case, the temptation was not an allurement to sin, but a trial of his faith and obedience. God, indeed, knows what is in men before the trial; but he uses means for discovering men to themselves, and to one another, for ends worthy of infinite wisdom. The actions by which God proves the good that is in men do not tend to lessen, but to increase and perfect it;—the actions by which he discovers the evil that is in men do not tend to increase, but to lessen it, and often effectually to cure it.

The command given to Abraham was of a very trying

nature, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom "thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and "offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the "mountains which I will tell thee of," Gen. xxii. 2. Every word here sets forth the exceeding greatness of the trial. Isaac was not only his *son*, but his *only son* by the free-woman, in distinction from the sons of his concubines—his only son *whom he loved* with a peculiar and ardent affection. He was the son of the promise, which was the ground of his faith—the son of his renewed strength after he was past age. He was the heir of the blessings promised unto Abraham—through whom his seed was to be multiplied—and in whom they were to be called or accounted the seed of Abraham, and children of God, Gen. xxi. 12. Rom. ix. 7, 8;—and through him the promise was to be accomplished, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of "the earth be blessed." Gen. xxii. 18. So that the command to offer up his son was not only contrary to every parental feeling, but seemed to overturn the promise, and strike at the very ground of his faith. Had Abraham been possessed only of mere natural principles, he could not possibly have obeyed this command. The apostle attributes his obedience to his faith; and James says, "faith "wrought with his works," Jam. ii. 22. Let us see then what it was he believed.

Ver. 19. *Accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure.*] The *faithfulness* of God to his promise was a fixed point with Abraham; and as this promise could not be accomplished in any other son but in Isaac, (Gen. xxi. 12.) so he was fully persuaded that, after he had slain and burnt him to ashes on the altar, "God was *able* to "raise him up even from the dead," and so fulfil all he had promised. Thus he believed God who quickeneth the dead, Rom. iv. 17. Here it ought to be noticed, that his faith was not merely a belief of God's *power* or *ability* to raise Isaac from the dead, but also a belief of the divine

veracity in the promise, which in the case supposed could not be made good without raising him from the dead.

Abraham is said to receive Isaac *from the dead in a figure*, or parable. Some understand this of the birth of Isaac, when Abraham's body and Sarah's womb were dead by reason of age, Rom. iv. 19. But it is evident that it is Isaac, and not Abraham, or Sarah, that is spoken of as *dead;* and it is Abraham who received him from the dead; the connection also shews that this was in consequence of his attempt to offer him. Abraham is said *to offer up* his only begotten son, verse 17; but as he was not actually but intentionally offered, so neither was he literally received from the dead, but only *in a figure;* and it is likely that in this he was a figure or type of Abraham's notable seed, who was actually delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. See Rom. iv. 23, 24, 25.

Ver. 20. *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.*] As faith must always respect divine revelation, and as the promise made to the mother of Jacob and Esau was, that the elder should serve the younger, Gen. xxv. 23. it may be asked, how Isaac could *by faith* intend to bless Esau the first-born, and make him lord of his brother? ch. xxvii. 29. Some think that Rebecca did not acquaint Isaac with that promise; but this is not likely: besides, if he had not known that promise, or some other revelation, how could he bless in faith? Others think that he did not understand the promise in its true sense; but surely a mistaken view of God's word is not true faith. It rather appears to me that the apostle is not speaking of Isaac's faith in relation to the *difference* put between his two sons, but in relation to the *certainty* of the future blessing which he foretold by the spirit of prophecy, and which had also been promised to him and his seed in general:—see chap. xxvi. 2—5. The apostle takes no notice here of the different characters of Esau and Jacob, or of the difference of the blessings pronounced upon them, but terms them in general *things to come;* and

his design is simply to shew, that Isaac pronounced these blessings upon his sons and their posterity, by faith in divine revelation as to their accomplishment.

Ver. 21. *By faith Jacob, when he was a-dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph, and worshipped leaning upon the top of his staff.*] This refers to Gen. xlvii. 31. and ch. xlviii. It was by faith in God's promises, and revelations, that he blessed Ephraim and Manasseh, predicting by the spirit of prophecy what should befal them. It is said he *worshipped leaning upon the top of his staff.* Our translators have rendered the Hebrew word *bed*, Gen. xlvii. 31. but the apostle agrees with the LXX. and Syriac versions. If it be asked what evidence is this circumstance of his faith? It may be answered, that his worship was an evidence of his faith in God; for he that cometh unto God must believe that he is, ver. 6. His performing it upon the top of his staff, shews the feebleness of his body, and that he was near his end; consequently, that he died in the faith, ver. 13. Farther, this particular act of worship was occasioned by the assurance given him that he should be buried in the land of promise, and so shews his faith that God would give that land to his seed; and as it was also a type of the heavenly and better country, it indicated his faith in the eternal inheritance, ver. 16.

Ver. 22. *By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departure af the children of Israel, and gave commandment concerning his bones.*] The account of this we have in Gen. l. 24, 25. His faith is thus expressed, "God "will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land;" and this faith was founded on the divine promise, for he adds, "which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to "Jacob." In this faith he gave commandment concerning his bones, that they should carry them up from Egypt, when the Lord should accomplish his promise.

Ver. 23. *By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child: and they were not afraid of the king's com-*

mandment.] The history of this is in Exodus, ii. 2, 3. Pharaoh had commanded that every Hebrew male child that was born should be cast into the river. When Moses was born he appeared goodly, proper, or (as Stephen expresseth it) exceeding fair, Gr. *fair to God*, Acts vii. 20. This circumstance would, no doubt, make his parents the more solicitous, even from natural affection, to save him; but as it is ascribed to their faith, it appears that they had a divine revelation that he was to be the deliverer of Israel out of Egypt, as God had promised; so Josephus relates, lib. 2, c. 5. They were not afraid of the king's commandment so as to deliver him up, but hid and nourished him three months in their own house, Acts vii. 20; and when they could no longer conceal him there, they cast him out, and watched him at a distance. Then Pharoh's daughter found him, and brought him up as her own son.

Ver. 24, 25, 26. *By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; chusing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season: esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.*] Moses believed the promises which God had made to Abraham, both respecting his natural posterity, the children of Israel, and the notable seed, Christ, in whom all nations were to be blessed. That he knew and believed these promises is clear, for he has recorded them, Gen. xv. 13—19. ch. iii. 8, 9, 13. ch. xxii. 18. Deut. xviii. 15. with John v. 46. Acts iii. 22, 23.

This his faith is described by its effects. 1st, It made him give up all alliance and connection with the ungodly world: "he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's "daughter." 2d, In connection with this, he gave up with all the riches, honours, and pleasures of this world. 3d, He joined his brethren, the people of God, while they were in a state of persecution, oppression, and abject slavery, and was not ashamed to own and call them brethren.

in such circumstances. 4th, He took part with them in all their disgrace and sufferings, and chose rather to suffer affliction with them, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. 5th, In comparing both situations, he did not consider himself a loser, but "esteemed the reproach of "Christ" (i. e. suffering for his faith in Christ to come) "greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." This estimation could not be formed upon any worldly prospect, such as the possession of the land of Canaan, for he never obtained that; but his faith "had respect to the recompence of the reward," i. e. the everlasting heavenly reward, of which the earthly inheritance was but a type, for so the Patriarchs understood it, ver. 9, 10—16.

Ver. 27. *By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.*] This cannot mean his first forsaking of Egypt, for then he feared the wrath of the king; see Exod. ii. 14, 15. It must, therefore, refer to the time when he led the children of Israel out of Egypt. Then, he was bold and undaunted in his last interview with the king, notwithstanding his threatening, Exod. x. 28, 29. and afterwards when Pharaoh pursued the children of Israel with his whole army, we find Moses encouraging them thus, "Fear "ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord," &c. chap. xiv. 13—15. It was by faith in the divine word, and confidence in the power and protection of God, that he led them forth; "for he endured," every hardship, "as "seeing him," viz. God, "who is invisible." Though he saw him not with his bodily eyes, yet by faith he saw him present with them, and on their side.

Ver. 28. *Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them.*] The Lord declared he would destroy all the first-born of the Egyptians; but he appointed the ordinance of the paschal lamb, and commanded the children of Israel to sprinkle its blood upon the lintel and side-posts of their doors, promising that when he should see this,

he would pass over the door, and not suffer the destroyer to come in unto their houses to smite them. Exod. xii. 21—24. Moses believed this word of the Lord, and so observed this institution through faith, as the ordinance of God for their safety. The sacrifice of the passover was a type of Christ's sacrifice, 1 Cor. v. 7.

Ver. 29. *By faith they passed through the Red sea, as by dry land: which the Egyptians essaying to do were drowned.*] Here is an instance of faith in the whole people of Israel. They were a little before this in great fear, and murmured against Moses in the language of unbelief, Exod. xiv. 11, 12; and they were upon the whole a stiff-necked and rebellious people, who at last died in the wilderness through unbelief. Yet in this instance they believed the word which God spake unto Moses respecting the way of their escape, by his opening a passage to them through the sea, ver. 15—19; and, accordingly, at his command, marched through the midst of it as on dry ground; while, in that awful and wonderful passage, the waters were a wall to them on their right hand, and on their left, ver. 22. The Egyptians, indeed, essayed to do the same; but it was not from faith in God, but hardness of heart against him, ver. 17. and so they were drowned.

Ver. 30. *By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encompassed about seven days.*] The account of this is in Josh. vi. 20. The faith here spoken of was their belief of what God had said to Joshua, when he gave him directions about compassing the city; and promised that its walls should fall down flat by a miraculous power on the seventh day. See ver. 2—6.

Ver. 31. *By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.*] We have a confession of Rahab's faith in her words to the spies, Josh. ii. 9—12. She said, "I know "that the Lord hath given you the land—we have heard "how the Lord hath dried up the waters of the Red sea "for you, when you came out of Egypt—for the Lord

"your God, he is God in heaven above, and in the earth "beneath." The works of this faith were her "receiving "the spies with peace," entertaining them in her house, saving their lives by concealing them, and sending them out another way, Josh. ii. 1—6, 15, 16. By these works James says, she was justified or approved, ch. ii. 25. So that "she perished not with them that believed not," i. e. she was not cut off with the sword as the unbelieving inhabitants of Jericho were; for we are told, that "Joshua "saved Rahab the harlot, and her father's household, and "all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto "this day, because she hid the messengers which Joshua "sent to spy out Jericho." Josh. vi. 25. It is not clear that the apostle means any thing more by her *not perishing* than this. She was afterwards married to Salmon, a man of the tribe of Judah, and was mother to Boaz, David's great grandfather, Mat. i. 5, 6. so that she was incorporated with the people of God.

Ver. 32. *And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:*] *Gideon*, through faith in God's word and power overcome the Midianites, Judg. vii. *Barak*, through faith in the promise of God by Deborah, overcome the army of Jabin and Sisera, chap. iv. 7—14, 15. *Samson's* faith in God was manifested when the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and enabled him to do such extraordinary feats against the Philistines. He had a divine warrant to vex the Philistines; he was both moved and miraculously strengthened by the Spirit of God, Judg. xiii. 25. ch. xv. 14. and he prays unto God in faith for that strength, ch. xvi. 28. *Jephthae* through faith in God overcome the Ammonites, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him for that purpose, Judg. xi. 29—32, 33. The vow which he made was very rash and sinful. Some think that he did not actually offer his daughter for a burnt-offering; but from the account, it plainly appears to me, that

he did—though it was most opposite to the revealed will of God.—As to *David, Samuel,* and the *prophets,* we can entertain no doubt of their faith. They had the word of God, as delivered by Moses; they had also new revelations; they believed them, and were actuated by them.

Ver. 33. *Who through faith subdued kingdoms*—] Such as Joshua who subdued the kingdoms of Canaan; David who subdued the Syrians and Edomites, 2 Sam. viii. 2—6—14, &c.

—*wrought righteousness*—] This may either respect their private characters as righteous men, or, which is more likely, some notable acts of righteousness or justice in a public character, such as did Phinehas, Joshua, David, Elijah, &c.

—*obtained promises,*—] Such as Abraham, David, &c.

—*stopped the mouths of lions.*] As Daniel who was cast into the lion's den, Dan. vi. 22. but received no hurt; and the reason given is, "because he believed in his God," ver. 23.

Ver. 34. *Quenched the violence of fire,*—] This respects Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who were cast into a burning fiery furnace, heated seven times more than usual, because they would not worship Nebuchadnezzar's golden image, Dan. iii. Their faith they express thus, "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the "burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thy "hand, O king," ver. 17; accordingly, the fire had no effect upon them, ver. 27.

—*escaped the edge of the sword,*—] Such as Moses, David, Elias, &c.

—*out of weakness were made strong,*—] i. e. performed great things by small and unlikely means through faith in God, such as Gideon, Samson, Jehosaphat, &c.

—*waxed valiant in fight,*—] As Joshua, Gideon, David, &c.

—*turned to flight the armies of the aliens*—] We have many instances of this in Joshua, David, and others, all which victories they obtained through faith in God's promises and power.

Ver. 35. *Women received their dead raised to life again:*—] Such as the widow of Zarephath, whose son was raised to life by Elijah, 1 Kings xvii. 13—24. and the Shunamite whose son was restored to life by Elisha, 2 Kings iv. 20—37.

—*and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection:*] Many think this refers to the martyrdom of the mother and her seven sons, mentioned in 2 Mac. ch. vii; these, indeed, would *not accept of deliverance* upon sinful terms; and they had the faith of a *better resurrection*, for the second son said, "Thou "like a fury takest us out of this present life; but the "King of the world shall raise us up to everlasting life," ver. 9. But without having recourse to the Apocrypha, the same things may be said of those that were stoned, sawn asunder, and slain with the sword, as afterwards mentioned. The apostle calls the resurrection they looked for, a *better resurrection*, not by comparison with the resurrection of the wicked, which was not in view, but in comparison of the restoration to life of the women's sons just before mentioned.

Ver. 36. *And others had trial of cruel mockings,*—] Some refer this to those who suffered by Antiochus, (2 Mac. vii. 7—10) who are said to be made mocking stocks. Others refer it to Isaac's being mocked by Ishmael, Elisha by the children, &c. which I think is not so probable.

—*and scourgings,*—] In the persecution by Antiochus, 2 Mac. vi. 3. ch. vii. 1—37.

—*yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment:*] As Joseph, Samson, Jeremiah.

Ver. 37. *They were stoned,*—] As Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21. see Mat. xxiii. 37.

—*they were sawn asunder,*—] The Jerusalem and Babylonish Talmud says, that Isaiah was sawn asunder by order of Manasseh; and it is generally thought he is the person alluded to here.

—*were tempted,*—] or tried by their sufferings. This is left out of several manuscripts; some think it should be

(επυρασθησαν) *were scorched*, or fried, as some were, 2 Mac. vii. 5.

—*were slain with the sword:*—] As Urijah, by order of king Jehoiakim, Jer. xxvi. 20, 23. and many other prophets in the time of Ahab, 1 Kings xix. 10, 14.

—*they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins,*—] Elijah was one of these; we frequently read of his mantle, 1 Kings xix. 13, 19. 2 Kings ii. 8, 13, 14. for which the Greek translators use the word μηλωτη, a sheep's skin. Other prophets, no doubt had the same to defend them from the cold when wandering in deserts to avoid their persecutors.

—*being destitute,*—] Like Elijah, 1 Kings xvii. 5, 6. ch. xix. 5, 6, 7.

—*afflicted, tormented;*] or evil treated. This was the lot of many of them.

Ver. 38. *(Of whom the world was not worthy) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens, and caves of the earth.*] So did David from the persecution of Saul; and Elijah, and other prophets from the persecution of Jezebel, 1 Kings xviii. 4. ch. xix. 9.

Ver. 39, 40. *And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.*] *These all*, viz. the forementioned worthies, *having obtained a good report through faith*, i. e. they are spoken of with approbation in the Scriptures, which record their conduct with honour, see ver. 2, 5: and as their conduct was influenced by their faith in God and his promises, so they obtained this good testimony *through faith*, without which it is impossible to please God, ver. 6. *Received not the promise*, i. e. they did not, in this life, receive the thing promised, or the accomplishment of the promise, *God having provided*, (προβλεψαμενου, foreseen) *some better thing for* (περι, concerning) *us, that they without us should not be made perfect. Us* here evidently signifies New Testament be-

lievers, and *they* Old Testament saints. The *better thing* provided for us than for them is the accomplishment of the promise which they received not in this world; and their not *being made perfect without us*, is their not fully enjoying the good thing promised separate from, or before us. But in order to throw a little more light upon these hints, I shall

I. Shew what is here meant by the promise.

II. In what respect Old Testament saints received not the promise, or were not made perfect.

III. How they are made perfect in connection with us through the accomplishment of the promise.

I. As to the *promise*, it cannot possibly be understood of any earthly promise, such as the land of Canaan, and the good things of it; for though Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, did not receive the accomplishment of this promise in their own persons, yet many of those here mentioned did so; so that it could not be said of them that they received not the promise of the land of Canaan. Besides, there are some mentioned here who never had that promise, such as Abel, Enoch, Noah, &c. It must, therefore, be a spiritual promise which is here mentioned.

I would observe farther, that though the promise is mentioned in the singular number, yet it includes many promises; and so in verse 13, which is parallel to this, the same thing is expressed plurally, and also in chap. vi. 12. This promise therefore includes,

1. The promise of Christ as the Seed of the woman who should bruise the serpent's head, Gen. iii. 15. This was the faith of Abel, Enoch, and Noah. The same promise was made unto Abraham, in these words, "In thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed," Gen. xxii. 18. In this promise the gospel was preached before unto Abraham, Gal. iii. 8. it being a promise of Christ, and of justification, and the gift of the Spirit through faith in him, ver. 14. It includes,

2. The promise of the heavenly inheritance, or eternal

life in a future state. This promise was couched under the type of the heavenly inheritance; and the apostle makes it to be imported in the oath sworn to Abraham, ch. vi. 12—19. when God said to him, "Surely blessing I will bless thee," &c. In this chapter he shows, that the faith of the ancient saints had a respect to a better country, that is, an heavenly—a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, ver. 10, 16; and that they renounced this world, and suffered the greatest afflictions, from their respect to the recompence of the reward, and hope of a better resurrection, ver. 26, 35.—The same thing is also imported in God's styling himself their God, ver. 16. Mat. xxii. 31, 32. Let us now enquire,

II. In what respects the Old Testament saints received not the promise, and were not made perfect.

It is evident from what has been already noticed, that the promise was made to them; and, therefore, their not receiving the promise, must signify the *accomplishment* of the promise, or the good things promised.

1. They did not receive the accomplishment of the promise of Christ, the Seed of Abraham, in whom all nations were to be blessed. Our Lord shows the blessedness of his disciples above them in this respect, "Blessed are the "eyes which see the things which ye see. For verily I "say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men "have desired to see those things which ye see, and have "not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, "and have not heard them," Mat. xiii. 16. 27. Luke x. 23, 24. They indeed "saw the promises afar off, and were "persuaded of them, and embraced them," Heb. xi. 13; and they had also types and prefigurations of the good things to come; but what is seen afar off, and through various obscure mediums, gives but a faint and imperfect light, in comparison of the actual accomplishment of them, and their being declared with plainness of speech. Hence,

1. The Old Testament saints were imperfect in knowledge, in comparison of New Testament believers. The

revelation they had was "as a light shining in a dark "place," 1 Pet. i. 19. Even the prophets themselves did not fully understand the meaning of their own prophecies, but enquired and searched diligently concerning the salvation and grace that should come; "searching what, or "what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in "them did signify, when it testified before-hand the suf-"ferings of Christ and the glory that should follow," 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. Our Lord says, that the least teacher in the kingdom of heaven, or under the gospel dispensation, is greater than John the Baptist, though he was more than a prophet, Mat. xi. 9, 11. Hence, also,

2. Their comfort and happiness must have been proportionably imperfect, for that could not go beyond the degree of revelation which they had. Under the law they were shut up unto the faith that should afterwards be revealed. The law made nothing perfect. Its sacrifices and purifications could not make the worshippers perfect as pertaining to the conscience, or give peace with God. The true atonement was not made, which purges the conscience, and perfects for ever them that are sanctified; but was only typified and obscurely revealed. The way into the holiest of all was not made manifest, nor was there that access to it with boldness and freedom as under the gospel. The Holy Spirit the Comforter, was not given in that manner or degree, as after Christ was glorified; so that they were much subject to the spirit of bondage and fear, being kept under the severe pedagogy of the law, like servants instead of sons; or like children in a state of non-age. Gal. iii. 23, 24. ch. iv. 1, 2, 3. Thus we see that Old Testament saints were comparatively imperfect in their knowledge, privileges, and enjoyments, owing to the imperfection of the dispensation under which they lived, while as yet the promise of Christ remained unfulfilled; and if we have any proper view of the great things brought about by the accomplishment of that promise, we can be at no loss to see how God hath provided some *better thing*

for us, than he did for them, during their pilgrimage in this world.

3. Though they died in the faith of good things to come, according to the degree of the revelation which they had, and were received into heaven; yet even there they were not made perfect till the promise was accomplished. They were indeed freed from all sin, fears, and sufferings, and received into a state of refreshment in the presence of God; but they had not a full view of the glory of God, and the accomplishment of the mystery of his wisdom and will in Jesus Christ; nor was it perfectly made known unto them until it took place. They waited in heaven by the same kind of faith and hope which they had in this world, expecting the coming and sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow; but till that took place they could not have the full knowledge and enjoyment of it, nor were they fitted for it. And we need not wonder at this, when we consider, that even the angels themselves, had not a clear and full view of this, but desired to look into it, 1 Pet. i. 12; and learned fresh knowledge of the manifold wisdom of God by the church, Eph. iii. 9. Let us now consider,

III. How they were made perfect, in connexion with New Testament believers, in receiving the accomplishment of the promise.

This imports that they came to the enjoyment of that which they believed and hoped for on earth, and which they were expecting in heaven; namely, the accomplishment of the Old Testament promises of Christ, and the good things to be brought in by him. When Christ actually came, made satisfaction for sin, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven, as king and high-priest of his church, that he might fill the things in heaven as well as on earth, Eph. iv. 10. their knowledge and enjoyment was greatly enlarged, an alteration then took place in heaven. —Christ, the Son of David, now sat down on his throne there—entered as high-priest within the veil, as a minister

of the true sanctuary—purified the heavenly things with the blood of his sacrifice—and appeared before God with acceptance—appeared as the slain Lamb in the midst of the throne, and as the object of the worship and adoration of the redeemed company. Herein the Old Testament saints saw all their desire, and all their salvation accomplished. They received of his Spirit—were reduced into one society with New Testament believers of all nations, Eph. i. 10. Heb. xii. 22, 23. and with all the elect angels.

CHAP. XII.

CONTENTS AND SCOPE.

FROM the numerous examples adduced in the preceding Chapter of the faith and patience of Old Testament believers, whom the apostle here represents as witnesses placed around us, to the power and efficacy of faith; he exhorts the Hebrews to lay aside every encumbering weight and entanglement, and to run with patience and perseverance the race prescribed to them in the gospel. In doing this, he directs them, above all things, to keep in view the great and encouraging example of Christ himself, the chief leader and perfecter of the faith, who, for the joy set before him, underwent the greatest sufferings in doing the will of God, and is now rewarded with a seat at his right hand, ver. 1, 2. He bids them attentively consider Jesus, and what he suffered at the hands of sinful men, lest they should be weary and faint in their souls, through the persecutions they sustained from their unbelieving countrymen, which were but slight when compared with what Christ suffered, ver. 3, 4. Farther, to console them in a state of suffering, he reminds them of the view which their own scriptures give of the afflictions of the people of God: that they are the fatherly chastisements which God administers to all his children; are

effects of his love, and intended for their profit, that they may be partakers of his holiness; and that though no chastisement, for the present, seemeth to be matter of joy, but of grief; yet afterwards it yields the peaceful fruits of righteousness to them who are properly trained by such discipline. And, from these considerations, he exhorts them, that, with meekness, submission, and fortitude, they should bear these afflictions to which they were exposed on account of their profession, ver. 5—13.

He next exhorts them to pursue peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord, ver. 14; and to promote and preserve this holiness, he urges upon them a mutual care one of another, looking diligently lest any of them come short of the grace of God in departing from the faith, and so by their errors and bad example, corrupt others, ver. 15; and lest any should give way to fleshly lusts, or, like Esau, be so profane as to renounce their heavenly birth-right for any paltry worldly enjoyment, ver. 16, 17.

To enforce the exhortation to peace and holiness, (ver. 14.) and engage them to constancy in the faith, he sets before them the excellency of the new covenant dispensation with its privileges, as contrasted with the law and the state of things under it. He observes, that in receiving the gospel they had not come to mount Sinai from whence their fathers had received the law; which was delivered in

so awful a manner, and accompanied with such terrible appearances, as to fill them with slavish fear, and keep them at a distance from God, ver. 18, 19, 20, 21; but they were come to Mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, of which the Jewish church and seat of worship were only types; and they were come into union and fellowship with a more glorious and holy society than the church of old Israel, even to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are registered in the heavens, to God the judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel, ver. 22, 23, 24.

He therefore exhorts them to take heed that they refuse not him that speaketh to them in the gospel revelation; and enforces this exhortation by the awful consideration, that if the Israelites did not escape punishment who refused him that spake on earth, delivering the law by the ministry of Moses, much less would they escape if they turned away from him that now speaketh by his Son from heaven, ver. 25. Further, to persuade them to relinquish entirely the Mosaic establishment, and to cleave alone to the gospel economy, he observes, that God's voice shook the earth when delivering the law, and establishing the church and kingdom of Israel; but that he has promised by the prophet

Haggai, chap. ii. 6, to bring about another and more important change, "Yet once more I shake "not the earth only, but also the heavens;" which words he explains as signifying the removing of the things shaken, viz. the things pertaining to the Jewish church and state, that the things pertaining to the gospel church, or kingdom of Christ, and which are never to be shaken, may remain, ver. 26, 27. He concludes this subject by the following practical use of it, "Wherefore, we re- "ceiving a kingdom which is not to be shaken, let "us have (or rather hold) the grace, whereby we "may serve God acceptably with reverence and "godly fear: for even our God is a consuming fire;" consequently will punish rebels and apostates under the gospel as well as under the law, ver. 28, 29.

PARAPHRASE.

CHAP. XII. 1. Therefore also, seeing we have so great a cloud of witnesses placed around us, laying aside every weight, and the easily besetting sin, let us run with patience the race set before *us;*

2. Earnestly looking unto Jesus, the chief leader and perfecter of the faith, *as our example:* who, for the joy *of the reward* set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame *attending it,* and hath sat down at the right-hand of the throne of God.

3. Consider attentively, therefore, him who endured such opposition of sinners against himself,

that ye be not wearied out, *through the continuance of the persecution*, fainting in your souls.

4. Ye have not as yet, *like Christ*, resisted unto blood, *or the loss of life*, striving against sin.

5. And have ye forgotten the exhortation which speaketh to you as to sons? "My son do not think "lightly of the Lord's chastisement, neither faint "when under his rebuke;

6. "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, "and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." Prov. iii. 11, 12.

7. If then ye endure chastisement, God dealeth with you as with *his* sons; for what son is there whom *his* father doth not chastise?

8. But if ye be without chastisement, of which all *sons* are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not genuine sons.

9. Farther, we have indeed had fathers of our flesh for chastisers, and we reverenced *them;* shall we not much more be in subjection to the father of *our* spirits, and live *for ever?*

10. For they truly for a few days, *during our childhood*, chastised *us* as seemed good to themselves; but he for *our* advantage, in order to *our* partaking of his holiness.

11. Now all chastening seemeth indeed for the present not to be *matter* of joy, but of sorrow: but afterwards it produceth the peaceful fruit of righteousness, to those who are trained thereby.

12. Wherefore, *that ye may not succumb in the*

combat and race, brace up aright the hanging hands, and strengthen the relaxed knees;

13. And make straight paths for your feet, that that which is lame may not be *entirely* dislocated, but rather may be healed.

14. Pursue peace with all *men, Gentiles as well as Jews,* and holiness, without which none shall see the Lord:

15. Looking diligently lest any *of you* come short of the grace of God; lest any bitter root springing up cause trouble, and by it many be defiled;

16. Lest there *be among you* any fornicator or profane *person,* as Esau, who for one meal gave away his birth-rights.

17. For ye know that afterward, when wishing to inherit the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place for a change of mind *in his father,* though with tears he earnestly sought it.

18. For ye *believing Jews* are not come, *like your forefathers,* to the mount *Sinai* that could be touched; and to the burning fire, and to blackness, and to darkness, and to tempest:

19. And to the sound of a trumpet, and to the voice of words, the hearers of which earnestly intreated that there might not be added to them a word *more:*

20. For they could not bear that which was commanded, "Even if a beast touch the mountain,

"it shall be stoned, or shot through with a dart." Exod. xix. 12, 13.

21. And so dreadful was the appearance, *that* Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid, and "tremble:"

22. But ye are come to Mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels;

23. To the general assembly and church of first-born *sons, who are* registered *as citizens* in the heavens, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect;

24. And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling *which* speaketh better things than *that of* Abel.

25. See to it that ye refuse not him *who is* speaking; for if they escaped not who refused him delivering the oracle on earth *by Moses,* much more we *shall not escape* who turn away from him speaking *by his Son* from heaven;

26. Whose voice then, *at the giving of the law,* shook the earth: but now, *concerning his speaking by his Son,* he hath promised, saying, "Yet once, "I shake not only the earth, but also the heaven."

27. Now this speech, "Yet once," &c. signifieth the removing of the things shaken, as of things *which were* made, that the things not to be shaken may remain.

28. Wherefore let us, receiving a kingdom not to be shaken, hold fast the grace by which we may

perform religious service to God acceptably, with reverence and pious fear.

29. For even our God is a consuming fire.

COMMENTARY AND NOTES ON CHAP. XII.

Ver. 1. *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses.*—] This translation imports, that the apostle had represented the ancient saints as compassed with witnesses; and here, that Christians are *also* compassed about with the same. But by the cloud of witnesses he evidently means these worthies mentioned in the preceding chapter. The word και, if it is any more than a mere expletive, should be rendered *and*, and τοιγαρουν *therefore*, and then it will read thus, "And therefore seeing we are compassed about," &c. A *cloud* signifies a great number. In this sense the word is frequently used by ancient Greek authors. The apostle had shown how the Old Testament saints had run the race, and finished their course with approbation, having obtained a good report through faith: here he represents them to the Hebrews as compassing them about, and as witnesses looking on to see how they shall acquit themselves in the Christian race; and from this consideration exhorts them,

—*let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us,*—] The person who would run a race with success, so as to obtain the prize, must divest himself of every weight or entanglement that may impede his progress. In like manner the apostle exhorts believers, if they would acquit themselves in the race with success and approbation, to lay aside every weight that may re-

tard their course; such as the *cares* of this life—the *lusts* of the eyes, the *lusts* of the flesh, and the *pride* of life—or the love of riches, pleasures, and honours—all immoderate desires after, and undue attachment to, the things of this world, however lawful in themselves:—*sloth*, carelessness, lukewarmness, and indifference as to the things of God. By *the sin that doth so easily beset us*, is generally understood the sin to which we are most prone, or to which we are most liable from constitution, habit, age, circumstances, &c, which indeed makes very good sense, and is a most important exhortation; for, while a man's darling sin, be it what it will, remains unsubdued, it will effectually hinder him from running the Christian race.—Some think the allusion is made to the long garment which hung easily or loosely round the body, and which racers threw off, lest its skirts should wrap itself round their legs and entangle them. It appears to me that the apostle had one particular sin in his eye to which he considered these Hebrews most prone, viz. the sin of unbelief; for the whole epistle was written to guard them against that sin; to shew them the dreadful consequences of it; and to establish them in the faith of the gospel.—This sin, in so far as it prevailed, rendered them unfit for running the Christian race, as it deprived them of every motive they had for running, and gave every discouragement thrown in their way its full power and influence over them. Therefore he exhorts them to lay aside every weight, and particularly the sin of unbelief, which had made its appearance in the weak and wavering state of some of them, and in the actual apostacy of others;

—*and let us run with patience the race which is set before us.*] By the *race*, he means the Christian life of obedience and sufferings in this world;—this race is *set before us;* the course of it is marked out to us both by the precepts and example of Christ; and for this end, that we should so run it that we may obtain, not in ways of our own devising. We are enjoined to run it *with patience*

under the various sufferings which we may meet with for righteousness' sake; and that we may neither deviate from the course, nor sink with discouragements from sufferings, we must run it

Ver. 2. *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith,*—] The word *our* is not in the original, nor is there any occasion for it. Though faith is the gift of God, of divine operation, and though it be given us on the behalf of Christ to believe; yet the apostle is not here speaking directly on that subject, or of Jesus as the giver of faith; but as an example in running the race. The word (ἀρχηγόν) rendered *author,* signifies *captain,* or *prime leader,* and this is its uniform sense through the whole of the New Testament. In Acts iii. 15. ch. v. 31. it is rendered *prince,* and in Heb. ii. 10. *captain.* Here, where it has relation to a race, it signifies the chief leader, who goes before, sets an example, and calls us to follow him. The *finisher of faith,* imports that his faith was *perfect* in degree, and that he continued stedfast in it to the *end,* or until he had *finished* his course of faith, and was crowned. The apostle, therefore, having set before them the example of the Old Testament saints in their faith and patience, directs their views to a higher and still more perfect pattern of imitation, viz. Jesus, who is the chief leader and finisher of the race of faith; and his example is set before them in the following words:

—*who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*] Here we see his *faith,* which was a firm belief of the joy set before him, and which he expresses, Psal, xvi. 9, 10, 11. Next we have the *effects* of this faith, in his sufferings and self-denied obedience unto the death; "he endured the cross," an accursed, cruel, and painful death, "despising the shame;" for, though it was a punishment attended with every circumstance of shame, ignominy, and disgrace, yet the glorious sufferer despised all the shame of the cross, and bore

it with resolution and patience. Lastly, we see the reward of honour and glory conferred upon him on that account; he "is set down at the right hand of the throne "of God." This is the example, and this is the reward he sets before them, for their imitation and encouragement.

Ver. 3. *For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*] Here he sets Christ before them as an example of suffering, and bids them diligently consider him, and compare all circumstances, such as the dignity of his person—his amazing and voluntary abasement—the nature, degree, and end of his sufferings—the instruments by which they were inflicted—his patience, meekness, and persevering fortitude under them, &c. The end of considering *him* was, "lest they should be weary "and faint in their minds," i. e. sink, fall, lose all patience and firmness of mind in the profession, and so throw it up by reason of the troubles and afflictions they endured for its sake.

Ver. 4. *Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.*] They had been made a gazing-stock, and had suffered reproaches and afflictions, and also taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods, ch. x. 34; but they had not yet given up their lives rather than commit the sin of apostacy, as some of the ancient saints had done, and as Christ their Saviour had done for their sakes; and since they had not yet been put to so severe a trial, they would be the more inexcusable in drawing back.

Ver. 5. *And ye have forgotten the exhortation,*—] This may be rendered interrogatively, "Have ye forgot-"ten the exhortation?"

—*which speaketh unto you as unto children,*—] i. e. addresseth you as a father doth his children, viz.

—*My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:*] Here he proceeds to a new argument whereby to press his exhortation

to patience and perseverance under sufferings; and this is taken from the nature and end, on the part of God, of all those sufferings which he sends or calls us to.

Ver. 6. *For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*

Ver. 7. *If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons: for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?*

Ver. 8. *But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.*

Ver. 9. *Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live?*

Ver. 10. *For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.*

Ver. 11. *Now, no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*

For the illustration of the above verses, the reader is referred to Appendix, No. IV.

Ver. 12. *Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;—]* The word *wherefore* refers to what he had said above, q. d. Since such were the sufferings of Christ, and their glorious issue; and since these are the gracious ends and benefits of God's chastening you, do not give way to dejection or despondency under afflictions and hardships, like those fainting in a race, whose hands hang down, and whose knees are feeble; but let these considerations invigorate your souls and renew your strength, so as to *lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees,* that ye may run and not be weary, walk and not faint in your Christian course.

The exhortation in this and the next verses respects not only their care of themselves, but of one another as

their christian brethren. The last is more immediately the sense of the passage quoted from Isa. xxxv. 3. "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble "knees: Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be "strong, &c.

Ver. 13. *And make straight paths for your feet,—*] Straight paths are opposed not only to crooked and winding paths which lead out of the true course, but particularly to rugged and uneven paths, which are full of stones and stumbling-blocks, which might obstruct their progress, and endanger their falling, see Isa. lvii. 14. He had before exhorted them to *lay aside every weight,* that so they might not be too heavy for the race; and here he bids them make straight paths for their feet, that so they might not turn aside, or fall and stumble in running. They were to beware lest the false doctrine of deceivers on the one hand, or the fear of persecution on the other, should either turn them off their course, or intimidate and make them stumble in it. They were also to beware lest by their own conduct they should discourage their brethren, or put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall, in their way; but on the contrary, to encourage and strengthen them, both by word and example, to run with patience the race set before them, and to smooth the way to them as much as possible.

—lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.] Some, by *that which is lame,* understand the feeble knee; and its being *turned out of the way,* they render *wrenched* or *dislocated,* which would be very apt to happen in rugged and uneven paths; and it is very likely the apostle keeps up the figure in this way. Yet, as by *that which is lame,* he evidently means Christians weak in the faith, and apt to be discouraged by the fear of sufferings; so the word (ἐκλραπῇ) rendered *turned out of the way,* signifies their turning off from the right way to avoid the difficulties they had to encounter upon it; and, therefore, lest this should happen, they were to

make straight or even paths for their feet. Not, indeed, by removing persecutions, for this was not in their power, but by encouraging and strengthening them under them, confirming the feeble knee, that they might be healed instead of being turned aside from the faith.

Ver. 14. *Follow peace with all men,*—] It is certainly the duty of Christians to follow peace with all men universally. An exhortation to this purpose we have in Rom. xii. 18, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live "peaceably with all men." They must be so far removed from an unpeaceable quarrelsome disposition, that they must be meek and patient towards all men, even the unreasonable who may give them much provocation; not rendering railing for railing, or seeking to avenge themselves: But they must beware of seeking peace with men at the expence of peace with God, or in any way inconsistent with conscience, sincerity, and an open and steady adherence to the faith and obedience of the gospel; for, neither the apostle himself, nor his Lord, ever followed peace with any man in this way, but suffered the hatred and opposition of the world.

But I apprehend the exhortation is not so unlimited as some understand it. The apostle is writing to Jews, whose national character was, that they were "contrary "to all men," 1 Thess. ii. 15; they were seditious and quarrelsome, had a high conceit of themselves, and a most contemptible view of the Gentiles. Many thousands of them, who were converted to the Christian faith, were, notwithstanding, zealous of the peculiarities of the Mosaic law, and eager for imposing them upon the Gentile converts; and from this source arose a deal of contention in the churches. In opposition to this ground of contention the apostle exhorts, "Let us, therefore, follow after "the things which make for peace, and things whereby "one may edify another," Rom. xiv. 19. It appears to me that he has an eye to the same thing here, and that he is exhorting them to drop these unprofitable disputes about

the law; and to follow peace with men of all nations, receiving the uncircumcised believers into their full charity and communion, as well as the circumcised, and without making any difference. This peace was necessary both for their own establishment in the faith, and for the confirmation of the weak against reverting to Judaism; and when they were thus united in peace, standing fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, it fortified them against the terror of their common enemy, the unbelieving world, whether Jew or Gentile. He adds,

—*and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.*] The Jews were too apt to value themselves upon their descent from Abraham, national holiness, circumcision, and external separation to God, whilst they were not properly attentive to the necessity of true holiness. In opposition to this national error, the apostle says, "he is "not a Jew who is one outwardly," Rom. ii. 29. "Hence-"forth know we no man after the flesh—therefore, if any "man be in Christ Jesus he is a new creature," 2 Cor. v. 16, 17. "For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision avail-"eth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature," Gal. vi. 15. And here he exhorts them to follow holiness, without which no man, be he Jew or Gentile, shall see the Lord.

Ver. 15. *Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God;*—] The word (επισκοπουντες) rendered *looking diligently*, is the same which in 1 Pet. v. 2, is translated *taking the oversight;* but as the apostle is not here addressing the elders among them in particular, but the whole brotherhood of Jewish believers, so by this word he cannot mean the peculiar exercise of an office, but that common oversight and care which all the brethren are to exercise in relation to one another, in opposition to the antichristian union which comprehends the children of the wicked one, whose language is, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

They are to look diligently *lest any man fail of the grace of God.* The word (ὑστερῶν) rendered *fail*, signifies sometimes *to lack, to want, to come behind;* at other times it means *to come short*, Rom. iii. 23. Heb. iv. 1. In the margin they have explained it *fall from;* and though this does not prove that the elect shall finally fall from the grace of God, yet it clearly shews that professors of the faith, such as they were, may, as is evident from many other passages in this epistle, (see chap. iii. 12. chap. iv. 1, 11. ch. vi. 4—7); the great scope of which was to guard them against apostacy. Therefore no man should so presume upon his own election, or that of his brother, as to take off the force of these cautions upon every needful occasion. It appears to me that the apostle has still the metaphor of a race in his view, and that the word here used signifies to *fall behind* in that race like those who are tired and faint; or to *come short* of the prize held out to the victor at the end of the race. In the first view, by the *grace of God* may be understood the *doctrine of God's free grace*, as opposed to Judaism, Gal. v. 4. In the last view, it must signify *the reward of grace* to be given them at last, 1 Pet. i. 13, which is the same with the promised rest, Heb. iv. 1. In either view, they were to look diligently lest any among them should by any means apostatize from the faith, and so come short of the salvation of their souls; for it is only he who endureth to the end that shall be saved. And this is the true way to follow true peace with all the brotherhood in a consistency with holiness. They were to look diligently

—*lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.*] These words are taken from Deut. xxix. 18, but more agreeable to the LXX. than the Hebrew text. By the *root of bitterness* is meant any apostate from the faith of the gospel, answerable to those described in the passage referred to, "Lest there "should be among you any man or woman, family or tribe, "whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our

"God, to go and serve the gods of these nations." They were to beware of the first appearance or *springing up* of such a root, which though it might at first seem harmless and of small account, would in time grow up, and gather strength, bearing the bitter fruits of gall and wormwood, so as effectually to *trouble them*, by subverting their minds, disturbing their peace, or producing other baneful effects in the church. Paul says, "I would they were even cut "off who trouble you." Gal. v. 12, i. e. who endeavoured to turn them aside from the doctrine of grace. He supposes that this bitter root would poison and contaminate others, for he adds, *and thereby many be defiled*, even as "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," (Gal. v. 9. 1 Cor. v. 6.) if not timely noticed, and purged out.

Ver. 16. *Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.*] A *fornicator* here does not signify merely one who is guilty of the crime of simple fornication, but imports also an adulterer and incestuous person. They were to take heed lest there should be any among them given to this species of fleshly lust, which is inconsistent with that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord, verse 14; and which excludes from an inheritance in the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. vi. 9. This implies also that they were to caution their brethren against every thing that tended to lead into that crime;—*or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.* A *profane* person is one who treats sacred things with irreligious contempt. Esau is termed a profane person, because he sold his birthright for the small consideration of one morsel of meat, or a little temporary gratification of his sensual appetite. The account of this we have in Gen. xxv. 29. *ad ult.* where we are told that "Esau despised "his birthright." Now if his birthright contained nothing in it of a sacred and religious nature, he could not properly be called profane for selling it; but when we consider that the first-born of Abraham's posterity were

consecrated to the Lord, Exod. xxii. 29.—that the birthright included the right of dominion over the younger brethren—the right to the inheritance—and the right to the priesthood—that Esau, by virtue of it, was the natural heir of the promises made to Abraham not only respecting the land of promise, but all the distinguished privileges of God's holy nation and peculiar people, which were typical of the spiritual blessings of the kingdom of heaven :—in selling his birthright therefore, he profanely despised all these sacred blessings, and forfeited to himself and posterity all these religious privileges, and that special relation to God which were conferred upon Jacob and his posterity, and that for one meal of meat. The Hebrews were to beware lest any among them should act such a profane part, by giving up with the spiritual blessings of Christ's kingdom, the heavenly inheritance, and their part among the church of the first-born, for any paltry exchange of worldly enjoyments, or sensual gratifications.

Ver. 17. *For ye know that afterwards when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.*] The history of this we have in Gen. xxvii. 38.

Ver. 18. *For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched,*—] He had exhorted them to *follow peace with all men,* Gentiles as well as Jews, whom Christ had now reconciled and incorporated into one body by his cross; and also to follow true *holiness,* as became their new relation to God by the new covenant as his peculiar people, verse 14: to *look diligently lest any fail of the grace of God* by reverting back to Judaism, and so draw others after them into apostacy from the faith, verse 15; or lest any of them should be induced by the lusts of the flesh, or the love of this present world, to give up with their title to the heavenly inheritance, ver. 16, 17. These exhortations to prayer and holiness, and against apostacy, he enforces by two motives.—1. The superior excellency

of the gospel state of things to that of the Mosaic establishment, under which they formerly were.—2. The more certain and dreadful vengeance that will overtake them if they turn away from the gospel, than what befel those who refused him that spoke on earth in giving the law. He begins in this 18th verse with the first of these motives, viz. the excellency of the gospel state of things above that of the old covenant. *For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched*, i. e. mount Sinai, in Arabia, from whence the law was delivered. Though this mount was not to be touched under pain of death while the law was delivering, and the glory of the Lord appeared upon it, yet it was a material mount *that might be touched*, which shews the earthly nature of that dispensation. By this he informs the believing Hebrews, that they were no longer under the peculiar covenant made with their fathers, and law which was therein delivered to them as a nation from mount Sinai. They were not come, in embracing the gospel, to such a dispensation as that, which was not only earthly and temporary, but full of terror, as he shews in the following particulars:

—*and that burned with fire; and unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,*] We are told, that "the Lord de-"scended upon the mount in fire," Exod. xix. 18; that "the mountain burnt with fire unto the midst of heaven," Deut. iv. 11; and that this was attended "with dark-"ness, clouds, and thick darkness," ib.; and as to the *tempest*, we read of thundering, lightning, and an earthquake, Exod. xix. 16, 18. ch. xx. 18.

Ver. 19. *And the sound of a trumpet,*—] This voice of the trumpet, we are told, "sounded long, and waxed "louder and louder." Exod xix. 19. This was the celestial trumpet, the trump of God, Mat. xxiv. 31. 1 Thess. iv. 16. The design of it at Sinai was to summons the people to appear before the divine Majesty to hear his law; for the Lord said to Moses, "when the trumpet soundeth "long they shall come up to the mount," Exod. xix. 13.

Accordingly, when "the voice of the trumpet was ex-
"ceeding loud, so that all the people that were in the
"camp trembled, Moses brought them forth out of the
"camp to meet with God, and they stood at the nether
"part of the mount," Exod. xix. 16, 17. Another end of this awful sound, was to strike the people with fear and awe of the divine majesty, which we find was the effect, ver. 16. ch. xx. 18.

—*and the voice of words,*—] The ten commandments are in the original called the *ten words*, Exod. xxxiv. 28. and we are expressly told that these were the words which this voice uttered upon this solemn occasion; for it is said, "God spake all these words, saying," &c. then follow the ten commandments, Exod. xx. 1—18. These words were not merely a voice, but articulate sounds spoken audibly in the hearing of all the people, and in their own language, so as that they might hear and understand them; and this was sufficient to gain credit to them, when Moses produced them afterwards written and engraven by the finger of God upon tables of stone. God is said to speak all these words; yet we are told the law was the word spoken by angels, Acts vii. 53. Gal. iii. 19. Heb. ii. 2. To reconcile this, we must admit that the Lord who was remarkably present there, spoke by the ministry of angels, who uttered the words as it were in his person. See note on chap. ii. verse 5.

—*which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more:*] They that heard this voice of words, were the congregation of ancient Israel at Sinai: and they were so terrified with the awful appearances already mentioned, and particularly with the tremendous voice of God speaking articulately to them, and delivering his law out of the midst of the fire, Deut iv. 33, 36, that *they entreated the word should not be spoken to them any more.* Not any more at all, but any more in that *immediate* and *dreadful manner* without a mediator, as their words spoken on that occasion show.

"And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." Exod. xx. 19. This request is more fully recorded in Deut. v. 24—28. The Lord granted them this request, and ordained Moses to act as mediator betwixt him and them in that covenant, Deut. v. 28—32. and upon the same occasion gives them the promise of the great prophet and Mediator of the new covenant, chap. xviii. 15—20.

Ver. 20. *(For they could not endure that which was commanded: And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned or thrust through with a dart:—]* The words may be rendered, "For they could not (εφερον) "bear the commandment," or charging; for διαςελλομαι signifies to command with vehemence or strictness. But the question is, what was this strict charge or command which they could not bear? Many refer it to the law of the ten commands, which, they think, the Jews could not bear, on account of its strictness and awful sanction, and the sense they had of their own inability to keep it perfectly, or live by it. But though it is a truth that they were unable to keep this law perfectly in its spiritual extent, so as to live by it; yet it does not appear that they were properly sensible of this; for they repeatedly promised the most unlimited obedience to all that the Lord had said, Exod. xxiv. 3, 7. Deut. v. 27. Therefore I conceive that it was the *awful manner* in which the law was spoken, that they could not bear, and so gives the reason why they entreated that the word should not be thus spoken to them any more. And some with great probability refer the command which they could not bear, to the following words:—"And if so much as a beast touch the "mountain, it shall be stoned or thrust through with a "dart." The strictness and severity of this prohibition is very remarkable in the Mosaic account of it; Exod. xix. 12, 13. "Take heed to yourselves that ye go not up into the "mount, or touch the border of it; whosoever toucheth

"the mount shall be surely put to death. There shall not "an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned or shot "through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live." The severity of this prohibition filled them with the fear of death while they stood at the nether part of the mount to hear the law, so that they could not bear it.

Ver. 21. *And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake).*] The *sight* was the whole appearance of things on the mount; the cloud, the smoke, the thick darkness, the devouring flame ascending to the midst of heaven, &c. The whole of this was so dreadful that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.

These words of Moses are not to be found in the history; yet, unless we suppose that they were immediately revealed to the apostle, as the history of the creation was to Moses, we must admit, that they were to be found in some of the Jewish records when the apostle wrote this epistle, and probably in the books of Moses, though now omitted; for, otherwise the Hebrews might be apt to contradict him, had he affirmed any fact relating to Moses, which they never heard of before. There are other historical facts mentioned in the New Testament which we do not find in the Old, such as the prophecy of Enoch, the names of the magicians in Egypt, the contention of Michael with the devil about the body of Moses, &c. which yet appear to have been known among the Jews of those times. If it be asked when it was that Moses thus expressed his fear, I think it was when the sight, and the sound, and earthquake, were most terrible; then, it is said, "Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice," Exod. xix. 19. The words which Moses spake on that occasion appear to me to be those mentioned by the apostle, "I exceedingly fear and quake;" and God's answer to him seems to be in the way of encouragement.

Ver. 22. *But ye are come unto mount Sion,*—] The apostle is still pursuing his argument why they should follow peace with all men and holiness, and beware of

apostacy from the faith by reverting back to Judaism. In the foregoing verses he shews them, that they were no longer under that peculiar constitution of things which was established at Sinai with the single nation of Israel, and excluded all others; and which was of an earthly, temporary, and figurative nature, as well as full of terror, filling them with the spirit of bondage and fear, ver. 18—22. But in opposition to this, he shews them that in embracing the gospel, they had come under a more excellent, heavenly, and generous dispensation, full of grace and benignity. *But ye are come unto mount Sion.* This is opposed to mount Sinai. There was a great difference betwixt Israel's coming to mount Sinai, and their coming even to the earthly Sion. Mount Sinai was in the deserts of Arabia, the vast howling wilderness, where they wandered and found no city to dwell in, Psal. cvii. 4. But mount Sion was in the place of their rest, the promised possession, where they had their city of habitation, ver. 7. It was the seat of royalty, where were set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David, Psal. cxxii. 5. On mount Sinai God appeared for a little time in terrible majesty, delivering the fiery law, which filled them with the utmost dread; but on mount Sion he dwelt and abode among them. He chose and desired it for his habitation, saying, "This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for "I have desired it." Psal. cxxxii. 13, 14. On Sion were placed the tabernacle and symbols of the divine presence; from thence God manifested his glory, shone forth propitious to his people, and corresponded with them, Psal. xxvii. 4. and l. 2. and from thence he dispensed his blessings, Psal. cxxviii. 5. such as *strength*, Psal. cx. 2. *help*, Psal. xx. 2. *life*, Psal. cxxxiii. 3. and *salvation*, Psal. xiv. 7. This made Sion the joy of the whole land, Psal. xlviii. 2. and to it the tribes went up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord, Psal. cxxii. 4. and the joy and desire with which they went up is frequently spoken of, Psal.

lxxxiv. 4—12. Isa. xxxv. 10. ch. li. 11. How different was all this from their coming to mount Sinai! Yet after all, that earthly Sion, and all the glorious things said of it, was but a type of this mount Sion unto which believers are come. It is opposed to the mount which *might be touched*, and so is not a material, but spiritual mount. It is in this Sion that Christ is laid for a foundation, Isa. xxviii. 16. 1 Pet. ii. 6. he is set upon it as king, in consequence of his resurrection, Psal. ii. 6. Acts xiii. 33. From this, his royal seat, he sends forth the rod of his strength, Psal. cx. 2.—his law and word, Isa. ii. 3. and governs his free and willing subjects of all nations; and from thence he dispenses among them all spiritual and eternal blessings. It is in this heavenly Sion that God has his true rest, and dwells among his people, Rev. xxi. 3, 4. and here Christ is represented as the meek and propitiating Lamb at the head of his redeemed company, ch. xiv. 1. This heavenly mount Sion, therefore, is the place of Christ's throne, the centre of power and government, the seat of New Testament worship, and from thence God commands all spiritual blessings. Now to this mount Sion all true believers are come, and

—*unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,*—] This is opposed unto the earthly Jerusalem, which is also termed the city of God; the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High, Psal. xlvi. 5. the city of the Lord of Hosts, the city of our God, Psal. xlviii. 8. Yet it was only a type of the heavenly Jerusalem, and so the apostle classes it with mount Sinai and Hagar, as being in bondage with her children; but (says he) Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all, Gal. iv. 25, 26. The former Jerusalem was *earthly*, but this is called *heavenly*, it being heavenly in its constitution, laws, government, inhabitants, privileges, and immunities, and is perfected in the state of heavenly glory; hence also it is termed the Jerusalsm *which is above*. The former city was built by man, and but of a temporary nature;

hence, the apostle alluding to it says, "Here we have no "continuing city," ch. xiii. 14. but this heavenly Jerusalem is a city which hath foundations, and its builder and maker is God, ch. xi. 10. Further, the earthly Jerusalem was peculiar to the Jews; they only could be free citizens and partakers of its privileges; but the heavenly Jerusalem is the mother of *all* God's children, Gentiles as well as Jews, who are made fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God. It is called the *city of the living God,* i. e. of the true God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: and so Christ terms it "the city "of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh "down out of heaven from my God," Rev. iii. 12. This holy city is accordingly represented in vision as coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride for her husband, and termed the Lamb's wife, Rev. xxi. 2, 9, 10. But let us enquire what is meant by the heavenly Jerusalem; and if we consider all that is said of it, it seems to signify both the church of Christ, and its new covenant state and privileges.—1. This Jerusalem is called the Lamb's wife, Rev. xxi. 9. so is the church, Eph. v. 25—33; and the church may be termed Jerusalem, with the same porpriety as the inhabitants of old Jerusalem were so termed, Mat. xxiii. 37. But then, 2d, we find the apostle making the earthly Jerusalem to answer to Hagar and the old covenant, and the Jerusalem which is above to answer to Sarah and the new covenant, which points out rather the state and privileges of the church than the church itself. Besides, the description which is given of the new Jerusalem in the Revelations, chap. xxi. clearly distinguishes the city from its inhabitants, the church; further, the apostle just a little after, mentions *the general assembly and church of the first-born,* which undoubtedly is the church of the redeemed; and if he meant nothing else by the heavenly Jerusalem, it would be a mere repetition. I am therefore inclined to think that by the heavenly Jerusalem, he means the happy state

and glorious privileges of the new covenant church, being free denizens of the new Jerusalem, and heirs of all its immunities, dignities, and glory.

—*and to an innumerable company of angels.*] The word is *myriads*, or ten thousands of angels. This answers to the multitude of angels which were on mount Sinai, at the delivery of the law, which are said to be thousands, Psal. lxviii. 17; and the law is said to be delivered amidst troops or ranks of angels, Acts vii. 53. see Deut xxxiii. 2. They spoke the word of the law in the person and authority of Jehovah, Heb. ii. 2. Gal. iii. 19. with Exod. xx. 1, 2, &c. But unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the gospel state of things. They are now reduced into a new order under the Son of man, 1 Pet. iii. 22. and incorporated into one society with the saints, Eph. i. 10. as their fellow-servants under Christ, Rev. xix. 10. ch. xxii. 9. being all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation, Heb. i. 14; and they minister, not with terror, as on mount Sinai, but with kindness and benignity, Psalm xxxiv. 7. and xci. 11, 12.

Ver. 23. *To the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven,*—] This alludes to the general assembly of the whole church of Israel at mount Sinai when the law was delivered to them, Deut. xviii. 16. Israel, though a nation, was but one assembly or worshipping congregation, and was a type of the whole catholic church of the redeemed from among all nations. Christ's church is but one general assembly, and it is composed of the whole family of God in heaven and on earth, and so the saints on earth are said to have *come* to that general assembly.—This assembly is termed the church of the *first-born.* The word is plural, and signifies first born ones. The church of Israel are called God's first-born, Exod. iv. 22, not because they were so by birth, for Jacob from whom they descended was not Isaac's first-born; but God made him first-born, in preference

to Esau, and gave his posterity the right of primogeniture. To the first-born belonged the excellency of dignity and power, or the dominion, Gen. xlix. 3.—a double portion of the inheritance, Deut. xxi. 17.—a right to the priesthood, which was transferred to the Levites, Num. iii. 12. —and they were commanded to be sanctified to the Lord, Exod. xiii. 2. The primogeniture of the church of Israel was but typical, but that of the church of Christ is the spirit and truth of it; for they are all sons of God and heirs of the heavenly inheritance by faith in Christ, while the former in relation to them are considered as children of the bond-woman, and answerable to this birth-right; they are all made kings and priests unto God, in virtue of being redeemed, Rev. i. 5, 6. This explains his caution against forfeiting their birthright, as Esau profanely did, verse 16.—Their names are said to be *written in heaven*, or enrolled there, alluding to the register of the first-born of the males of Israel, Num. iii. 40. So all the names of the true members of this church of first-born ones are written in heaven, Luke x. 20; in the book of life of the slain Lamb, Rev. xiii. 8. ch. xxvii. 8. and that from the foundation of the world, which points out their being foreknown, and predestinated to the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ, Eph. i. 5.

—*and to God the judge of all.*]—At mount Sinai, Moses brought forth the people out of the camp, to meet with God, that they might receive the law immediately from him as their king and judge. And so the Lord is in a particular manner termed their judge, king, and lawgiver, Isa. xxxiii. 22. But in this new state of things he is termed God the judge *of all*, i. e. of Gentiles as well as Jews. At mount Sinai the people could not stand before him as a judge according to the terms of the law, but were filled with the utmost terror. But in this blessed state of things, believers have access to, and acceptance with God the judge of all, who justifies them in Christ, pleads their cause with their enemies, and rewards them at last.

—*and to the spirits of just men made perfect.*] This grand society consists not only of the saints on earth, but of those who have departed this life.—Their *spirits* are in heaven—They are *made perfect* in the accomplishment of what they waited for—in freedom from sin—in having finished their course of obedience and sufferings in the enjoyment of the reward. With these the saints on earth have communion as one society.

Ver. 24. *And to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant,*—] When Israel could not bear the Lord delivering the law, they intreated Moses to be a mediator between God and them; and upon this occasion Christ was promised, Deut. xviii. And now we are come unto him, who is the foundation and centre of all this catholic communion, the true Mediator between God and man, who hath established the new covenant, and whose sacrifice and intercession is efficacious, and suited to remove our fears, and give us peace and holy confidence towards God.

—*and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel.*] This alludes to the sprinkling of blood at the dedication and ratification of the old covenant at Sinai, Exod. xxiv. 8. and on the great day of anniversary atonement, Lev. xvi. 14. and Heb. ix. 13—25. It imports the ratification of the new covenant and the continued *application* and *efficacy* of Christ's blood to cleanse from sin. It speaks better things than the blood of Abel, which cried for vengeance. It cried for mercy, even on his very murderers, and obtained it.

1. What a grand catholic association is this! Heaven and earth united into one glorious general assembly. In *heaven* the angels and spirits of just men—On *earth* Jews and Gentiles of all nations—All reconciled to God and to each other—recapitulated into one in Christ the centre and foundation of union, Eph. i. 10. 2. How excellent this state of things in comparison of the former. It is *heavenly*, *spiritual*, full of *light*, *grace*, nearness, peace, love and joy, and *final glory*. 3. Death does not se-

parate or dissolve this society. 4. We enter into it by *faith.* 5. Let us prize such a glorious connection, and walk worthy of it.

Ver. 25. *See that ye refuse not him that speaketh.*]—*By him that speaketh* we are to understand God; and that as speaking to us in the gospel by Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, whose blood speaketh better things than that of Abel, as in the foregoing verse; for Christ is that prophet who was promised at the giving of the law by whom God was to speak, Deut. xviii. 18, 19. accordingly he "hath in these last days spoken unto us by "his Son," Heb. i. 2.—He exhorts them not to *refuse* him that speaketh, and enforces his exhortation by this argument,

—*for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:*]

Him that spake on earth was also God, in delivering the law to Israel, but it was by the ministration of angels, and mediation of Moses, "who received the lively oracles "to give unto them." Stephen tells us how they refused him that spake on earth by Moses, "To whom our fathers "would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their "hearts turned back again into Egypt, Saying unto Aaron, "Make us gods to go before us; for as for this Moses, "who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not "what is become of him." Acts vii. 38—41. In refusing Moses, therefore, they refused him that spake by him on earth, and rebelled against God; and so they *escaped not* the punishment due to their guilt, for they came short of the earthly rest, and their carcases fell in the wilderness. Now, says the apostle, if this was the case with them, "how much more shall not we escape, if we turn away "from him that speaketh from heaven." God spake in the old covenant by *Moses*, who was but a servant, but now he speaks in the gospel or new covenant, by his *Son*, whom he hath appointed heir of all things. He spoke

then *on earth*, and respecting an *earthly economy:* but now he speaks from heaven, respecting heavenly, spiritual, and eternal things. The higher degree of guilt in refusing or turning away from him that speaketh, ariseth from the superior dignity of him by whom he now speaks, *the Son*, —the place from whence he speaks, *heaven*—and the superior importance and grace of what is spoken, the *great salvation;* and therefore the punishment of contemning such majesty, and despising such grace, will in proportion be more dreadful and unavoidable. See to the same purpose, chap. ii. 1—5. chap. x. 28, 29.

Ver. 26. *Whose voice then shook the earth,*—] This refers to the earthquake which attended God's voice at giving the law, Exod. xix. 18; but from the scope of the passage it is evident, that this shaking was emblematical of the *alteration* or *change* which then took place by what was spoken; even as the earthquake and rending of the veil at Christ's death, betokened the glorious alteration which took place at that time. That the phrase signifies some great alteration, revolution, or change, is evident from Isa. xiii. 13. where, speaking of the destruction of Babylon, the Lord says, "I will shake the heavens, and "the earth shall remove out of her place." And of the destruction of the Jews, it is said, Joel ii. 10. "The earth "shall quake, and the heavens shall tremble." Had the apostle only meant that the frame of the material earth was *shaken* by the voice of God at Sinai, then it would follow that the earth would be *removed* by the second shaking, mentioned in Hag. ii. 6, 7. for that, says he, "signifies the removal of the things that are shaken." But no such thing happened at the second shaking, when the desire of all nations came. The shaking, therefore, in both cases must be a figurative expression, importing some notable change or alteration in the state of things. Now the change which took place by the voice of God at Sinai, was the establishment of the old covenant and all that pertained to it, with the nation of Israel. But this alteration,

however great and glorious, did not extend unto heaven. There was nothing spiritual or heavenly in all that was established by that shaking. It was a temporal covenant with a worldly nation, containing temporal promises, an earthly inheritance, a worldly sanctuary, a typical priesthood, and carnal ordinances. Therefore it is said, he shook the *earth only:*

—*but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.*] This promise we have in Hag. ii. 6. and it evidently respects the coming of the Messiah before the destruction of the temple, and the great alteration that was then to take place in the state of things; both in the removal of the things that are shaken, and also in establishing a new, everlasting, and heavenly constitution of things under the Messiah. The apostle expressly mentions the first of these alterations in explaining the promise.

Ver. 27. *And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.*]—The *shaking of the heavens and the earth* signifies the great alteration that should take place, and the words *yet once more* import that there should be but *one* such alteration from the time of this promise; and consequently that the things which succeed that shaking shall remain unmoved for ever; and these things, he shews, pertain to the kingdom of the Messiah, which Christians receive, and which cannot be moved, as in the next verse.

There is, however, some difficulty, in fixing the precise meaning of these words of the apostle, "*the removing of those things that are shaken as of things that are made.*" Whether are they called *things that are shaken* from their being established by the first shaking at Sinai, and so entirely Jewish things; or whether are they so called from their being shaken at the shaking of both heaven and earth, as mentioned in the promise, and so import a change that was to take place in other things besides those of the

Jews? It is, however, certain, that the apostle had the old covenant constitution of things principally in his eye, as he was writing to Jews, with a design to bring them off from their remaining attachment to Judaism; and nothing could be more to his purpose than to shew them, that these things were to be removed at the coming of the Messiah, agreeably to what he had told them before, that the old covenant was to vanish away, chap. viii.; and this is farther evident from their being termed *things that are made*, which is a term frequently applied to Jewish things, such as their tabernacle and temple, which were made with men's hands, and so of a fading changeable nature. The shaking of the earth then signifies the removal of these earthly typical things.

But then this second shaking or alteration extends not only to earth, but *also to heaven;* which is the establishing of the new covenant, and of the things pertaining to the kingdom of heaven, as coming in place of the things removed at shaking the earth, such as—The Word's becoming flesh of the Seed of Abraham—The ratification of the new covenant of remission of sins and eternal life in his blood—The bringing sinners of all nations, formerly excluded, into the church and family of God—The changing the state of the church from that of an earthly nation to that of a spiritual and heavenly society; the general assembly and church of the first-born, gathered together in one in Christ by a union of heaven and earth—By Christ's resurrection and ascension far above all heavens, into heaven itself. There Christ appears in a new form as the slain Lamb in the midst of the throne. Exalted in his human nature above angels who are reduced into a new order under him—Perfected the spirits of just men who had died in the faith of his coming—Erected the throne of his kingdom transferring it from the earthly Zion—Translated thither the seat of worship and all things that were represented by the tabernacle, temple, and priesthood, and erected a mercy-seat in heaven, and open-

ed a new and living way into the holiest of all for sinners of all nations. These are the changes which took place in heaven, and these are the things which *cannot be moved* like the former things, as the words *Yet once more* import; for at the consummation of all things nothing shall then be moved but what belongs to our state of imperfection in this world. The apostle has particularly Christ's kingdom in his view as that which cannot be moved, and that kingdom as obtained and enjoyed by believers.

Ver. 28. and 29. (See Appendix, No. 5.)

CHAP. XIII.

CONTENTS AND SCOPE.

In this concluding chapter the apostle exhorts the Hebrews to persevere in the exercise of brotherly love, ver. 1.—To be hospitable to strangers, ver. 2.—To remember with compassion the imprisoned and afflicted for the gospel's sake, ver. 3.—Recommends marriage and chastity, since God will punish whoremongers and adulterers, ver. 4.—Cautions them against the love of money or covetousness, and enforces contentment with such things as they have, by the promise of God, that he will never leave nor forsake them, ver. 5, 6.—He exhorts them to pay a due respect to the memory, instructions, and example of their faithful leaders, who had now honourably ended their course of trials and sufferings, and to imitate their faith, ver. 7.

From the consideration that Jesus Christ is unchangeably the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever, he exhorts them to beware of being tossed about with various and strange doctrines, and particularly such doctrines as drew them off from Christ to depend on the Levitical sacrifices and meats, for pardon and acceptance. In opposition to which he says, "It is good that the heart be "established by grace," i. e. the grace of free

pardon through the sacrifice of Christ, "not by "meats, in which they that have walked, have not "been profited," ver. 8, 9.—He farther informs them, that all who adhere to the tabernacle service, and depend, in whole or in part, on the expiatory sacrifices offered there for pardon and acceptance with God, have no right to partake of Christ's sacrifice; but deprive themselves of all benefit from it, ver. 10.—This, he shews, was figuratively taught them by their own law, (Lev. xvi. 27.) which prohibited the bodies of those animals, whose blood was brought into the holies, by the high-priest for a sin-offering, to be eaten, either by the priests or people, but to be totally burnt without the camp, ver. 11. For though, by virtue of divine appointment, these sin-offerings availed so far as to obtain pardon for their offences against God, considered as their political Sovereign, and Head of their commonwealth, and to avert the temporal penalties incurred by them; yet being utterly insufficient to procure a real and everlasting remission of the moral guilt of any of their sins committed against him as the moral Governor of the world, (Heb. x. 4.); they were not, in token of this, permitted to feast on them, as Christians do by faith on the expiatory sacrifice of Christ, whose blood cleanseth from all sin, and perfects the conscience. But for the more evident and exact accomplishment of the thing signified by the typical sin-offerings, he observes, that as

their bodies were burnt without the camp, "there-
"fore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people
"with his own blood, suffered without the gate," ver. 12.—Christ, in redeeming his people of all nations, went without the gate of Jerusalem to suffer the accursed death of the cross, and by this, his peculiar connection with the Jewish church was dissolved; their typical priesthood and sacrifices were virtually set aside as having reached their end; and their temple, in which those sacrifices were offered, was left unto them desolate and devoted to destruction. Therefore he exhorts the believing Hebrews to go forth to Christ without the camp, or Jewish church, to relinquish all its typical institutions, and to adhere to Christ alone, patiently bearing whatever persecution or reproach they might suffer for his sake, who endured the cross, and despised the shame on their account, ver. 13.—And farther, to influence their compliance, he adds, "For here we have no continuing
"city, but we seek one to come," ver. 14.—As if he had said, 'The earthly Jerusalem is soon to be destroyed, together with the whole frame of its civil and religious privileges, so that in this world we have no abiding city; but we earnestly seek one to come, the heavenly Jerusalem, which God hath prepared for, and promised to all the true followers of Christ.'

The apostle has shewn that Christ hath sanctified the people with his own blood (ver. 12.) con-

sequently put an end to all farther sacrificing for sin, as he has by one offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified (Ch. x. 14, 18.); yet he also shews, that there are sacrifices of another kind which Christians are still to offer, answerable to the thank-offerings or peace-offerings under the law. Of these christian sacrifices he mentions two sorts, both of which must be offered to God through the mediation of Christ our priest, through whom alone they can be accepted: One is "the "sacrifice of praise continually to God, that is "the fruit of our lips confessing to his name," ver. 15,—which is not to be confined entirely to praise, but includes the whole of that divine worship which we owe him: The other is the sacrifice of good works in communicating of our substance, "But to do good, and to communicate, forget not; "for with such sacrifices God is well pleased," ver. 16.

He exhorts them to obey their leaders or pastors, and submit themselves to their instructions and admonitions; enforcing this by the importance of the pastoral work to their spiritual interests, and the damage that would accrue to themselves from a refractory and disobedient conduct, ver. 17.—He requests their prayers on his behalf, that he may have freedom and success in preaching the gospel; and that they might do this with the greater confidence, he assures them that whatever prejudices his enemies had against him, he had a

good conscience, being desirous in all things to behave uprightly, as an apostle of Christ, ver. 18. —And he particularly desires their prayers that he may be restored to them the sooner, ver. 19.—He then puts up a most suitable and comprehensive prayer for the Hebrews, which he concludes with a doxology, ver. 20, 21.—But as the Hebrews might perhaps find several things in this epistle hard to digest on account of their Jewish prejudices, he affectionately beseeches them, to suffer the word of exhortation which he had written to them very briefly considering the copiousness and importance of the subject, ver. 22.—He informs them that Timothy was set at liberty, with whom, if he came to him soon, he promises to see them, ver. 23.—He sends his salutations to their spiritual guides, and to all the saints in Judea; and also the salutations of the Christians of Italy, ver. 24. —Lastly, he concludes with his usual apostolical benediction, ver. 25.

PARAPHRASE.

CHAP. XIII. 1. Let brotherly love, *which was formerly so fervent among you*, continue.

2. Be not forgetful of kindness to strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

3. Remember those who are in bonds *for the cause of Christ*, as bound with them; and those who suffer evil, as being yourselves also in the body.

4. *Let* marriage *be* honourable among *you* all, and the *marriage* bed *be* undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

5. *Let your* conversation, *or manner of life, be* without the love of money, being content with *your* present circumstances: for *God* himself hath said, "I will never leave thee, neither will I ever for-"sake thee."—Josh. i. 5.

6. So that it emboldens us to say, "The Lord "is my helper, and I will not fear what man can "do to me."

7. Remember your *deceased* leaders, who have spoken to you the word of God; the exit of whose conversation attentively observing, imitate *their* faith.

8. Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

9. Be not *therefore,* carried about with various and strange doctrines *concerning the efficacy of the legal sacrifices and meats;* for it is good that the heart be established by grace, *trusting in Christ's sacrifice for acceptance,* not by meats, in which they that have walked have not been profited.

10. We have an altar from off which they have no right to eat, who in the tabernacle perform divine service.

11. For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is carried for a sin-offering into the holies by the high priest, are *not allowed to be eaten, but* burnt without the camp.

12. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, *carried into the heavenly sanctuary,* suffered without the gate *of Jerusalem.*

13. Therefore let us go forth to him out of the camp *of the Jewish church,* bearing his reproach.

14. For we have not here an abiding city, but we earnestly seek one to come, viz. *the heavenly Jerusalem.*

15. Through him, therefore *who is our high-priest,* let us offer up a sacrifice of praise continually to God; that is the fruit of *our* lips, confessing to his name.

16. Moreover, of doing good, and communicating *of your substance,* be not unmindful; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

17. Be obedient to your leaders, and submit *to them;* for they watch for *the good* of your souls, as being to render an account, that they may do this with joy, and not with groaning; for that would be unprofitable for you.

18. Pray for us; for we are confident that we have a good conscience, being desirous in all things *relating to our walk and doctrine,* to conduct ourselves honestly, *and becoming our office.*

19. And I the more earnestly entreat *you* to do this, that I may the sooner be restored to you.

20. Now *may* the God of peace, who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shep-

herd of the sheep, by the blood of the everlasting covenant,

21. Make you fit for every good work; to perform his will, working in you what is acceptable in his sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom *be* the glory unto ages of ages. Amen.

22. Now I intreat you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation *contained in this letter;* for indeed I have written it to you in few words, *considering the weight and importance of the subject.*

23. Know that brother Timothy is set at liberty, with whom, if he come soon, I will see you.

24. Salute *in my name* all your leaders, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.

25. The grace *of God* be with you all. Amen.

COMMENTARY AND NOTES ON CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 1. *Let brotherly love continue.*] *Brotherly love* is the love of our brethren in the faith, the same with that enjoined in Christ's new commandment, John xiii. 34. and so much insisted on in the first epistle of John. The word *charity* has sometimes a more extensive sense, especially when distinguished from *brotherly kindness*, as in 2 Pet. i. 7. and may have a respect unto all men; but in that case it does not signify a good opinion of them in a religious view, but a benevolent disposition toward them, ready to do them good as we have opportunity.

The exhortation here supposes that they had brotherly love; and indeed the believing Jews were very remark-

able for this at first, being of one heart and of one soul, selling their possessions, and parting them to all men, as every man had need, Acts ii. 44—47. But it appears that their love was not now so fervent, and therefore there was occasion to exhort them to *let it continue.*

Ver. 2. *Be not forgetful to entertain strangers:*—] Gr. "Of stranger-love be not forgetful." By *strangers* he means christian brethren, who might be going about preaching the gospel, or obliged to leave their native place on account of persecution, or to travel abroad on other accounts, 3 John ver. 5, 6, 7. By (φιλοξενια) *stranger-love* he means *hospitality*, or entertaining them in their houses with cheerfulness and affection, and, if need be, helping them on their way; and so the same word is translated *hospitality* in two similar exhortations, Rom. xii. 10. 1 Pet. iv. 9. The argument he uses for this duty is,

—*for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.*] He has a particular view here to Abraham and Lot, who entertained angels hospitably in their houses, imagining they were real men. Many think that one of the three angels which Abraham entertained was the Son of God, as they imagine he is called *Jehovah*, with whom Abraham pleaded when the other two were gone towards Sodom, Gen. xviii. 22—33. But it does not appear clear to me that any of the three angels are called Jehovah. I rather think they were attendants of Jehovah who manifested himself in some visible emblem to Abraham, such as the Shechinah called the *glory of the Lord*, see ver. 1, 2. and that it was to this appearance of the Divine Majesty that Abraham addressed himself, ver. 22, 23. and not to any of the angels. Further, it is evident that the force of the apostle's argument for entertaining strangers lies in the *dignity* of those who were entertained unawares; they were not mortal men, but angels; and what additional force must it have given it could he have added, "and not only angels, but Jehovah himself;" but he

says no such thing, and therefore I imagine thought no such thing.

Ver. 3. *Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them,—*] *Them that are in bonds,* are Christian teachers, and others, who were imprisoned and deprived of their liberty by persecutors for publishing the gospel, or professing the faith of Christ. The unbelieving Jews, their countrymen, were frequently the authors of this treatment. He exhorts them to *remember* such, i. e. to remember them with compassion and affectionate concern; to pray for courage and constancy to them under sufferings, as well as deliverance; and not only so, but visit, comfort, and supply them, to the utmost of their power. They were in all respects to feel for, and act toward them, *as bound with them*, a very comprehensive and emphatic expression. When Saul persecuted the church, Jesus said unto him from heaven, "Saul, Saul, why per-"secutest thou me; I am Jesus whom thou persecutest," Acts ix. 4, 5. Jesus considered himself as bound and persecuted with the members of his body, who were suffering for his cause. So Christians are members one of another, and have but one common cause and interest; so that if one member suffer bonds and imprisonment for that cause, all the rest should feel for him as bound with him.

—and them who suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.] *Them who suffer adversity*, means all such as suffer not only various kinds of persecution for Christ's sake, but who are in any kind of trouble or distress incident to this mortal state. They were to remember their brethren in all such circumstances, as being themselves also in the body; which some understand to mean, that they were to sympathise with, comfort, and assist them, as being themselves members of the same mystical body with them, according to 1 Cor. xii. 12—27. This, indeed, is a powerful motive, and not to be excluded; but I understand the apostle here as meaning the mortal body, q. d.

"Remember your brethren who suffer adversity of any "kind, as being yourselves while in this mortal body "subject to the like adversities;" and, indeed, we never properly and feelingly consider the case of our brethren, till we, as it were, make it our own, and really believe that we are liable to the like afflictions.

Ver. 4. *Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled:*]—It cannot be determined with certainty from the original whether this is an affirmation or exhortation. The translators have understood it as an affirmation, and accordingly have supplied the elipsis by the word *is;* so that the full sense according to them is this, "Marriage is "honourable to all men, and the bed undefiled is honour-"able." Others, however, with a great deal of reason, consider this is an exhortation. 1. Because it is just in in the middle of a string of exhortations. 2. Because the very next verse has the same elipsis, but is supplied, answerable to an exhortation with the words, *let your—be —and be.* And, 3. Because this 4th verse makes good sense as an exhortation, and the latter clause comes in as a reason enforcing it, and should be introduced with a (γαρ) *for*, as in the two best and oldest manuscripts and the old Latin version. According, to this the words will run, "Let the honour of marriage be preserved by all," or in all respects, "and the bed be undefiled; for whore-"mongers and adulterers God will judge." I do believe this is the true rendering of the words. However, the sense is much the same.—From either view we learn,

1. That marriage is an *honourable* state. It is the ordinance of God which he instituted in Paradise while man was yet pure and untainted with sin; which he appointed for the mutual happiness of the man and woman, and blessed as the legitimate source of mankind, Gen. ii. 23, 24. which Christ honoured with his presence, John ii. 1—11. and established upon its original footing, Mat. xix. 5. and it is intended for a holy and pure end, viz. to avoid fornication, 1 Cor. vii. 2. There were some in those days

who condemned marriage as an impure and unlawful state, inconsistent with the imperfection of the Christian religion, 1 Tim. iv. 3. and they seem to be Judaizers. In opposition to this error, which was generally connected with much impurity, he represents matrimony not only as lawful but honourable.

2. He shews that it is honourable *in all*, which signifies either in *all persons* of whatever rank, degree or profession; or in *all respects* in every thing pertaining to it as a divine institution. This I think confutes the Romish church who will not allow her priests to marry at all, as also those who adopt part of that sentiment in making a second marriage to disqualify an elder; for this carries an idea that it is not honourable, at least *in all persons*, or *in all respects*.

3. That the way to preserve the honour of the marriage state is to keep the bed undefiled from all dishonourable lusts; to be chaste, true and faithful one to another, maintaining the marriage covenant inviolate, in all purity of mind and body. "For whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" i. e. he will condemn and punish such at last. They have no inheritance in the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. no place in the new Jerusalem, Rev. xxii. 15. but shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, chap. xxi. 8.

Ver. 5. *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have:*—] The word rendered *covetousness* here signifies *the love of money;* the evil of this common and decent vice is strongly set forth in 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. "They that will be rich fall into "temptation and a snare, and into many hurtful and fool-"ish lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. "For the love of money (the same word as above) is the "root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they "have erred from the faith, and have pierced themselves "through with many sorrows." Nothing can be added to this account of the evil of the love of money. It is the

root of *all evil;* and nothing can set in a stronger light the importance of this exhortation. "Let your conversation be without covetousness." The opposite of this is, "be content with such things as ye have." Contentment is also opposed to covetousness in the forecited passage; "Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we "brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we "can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment "let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich," &c. The thing we are to be content with is food and raiment, which is all that is necessary for the body; and if we are not content with these things, we are undoubtedly covetous. But it may be said, there are different kinds and qualities of food and raiment, and though we are to be content with these and not covet more, yet surely we may desire to be more delicately fed and genteelly clothed than we are; or what is the standard of contentment as to these articles? To this the apostle answers, "Be con-"tent with *such things as ye have.*" Indeed if we do not make this the standard of contentment we shall never be content at all. But the great dissuasive from covetousness, and argument for contentment, is the divine promise,

—*for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*] These words in the Greek contain five negatives, "No, I will not leave thee; no, no, I will not forsake "thee." This promise was originally made to Joshua, Jos. i. 5. and is here applied to every particular believer as a ground of trust and contentment, see Rom. xv. 4. 2 Cor. i. 20. God who feeds the fowls of heaven, and clothes the grass of the field, will much more feed and clothe his own children; and he will never leave and forsake them to the power of wicked men to deprive them of what he sees meet for them; so that the Christian may firmly trust in the living God, and boldly say with the Psalmist,

Ver. 6. *The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.* Psal. lvi. 4, 11. and cxviii. 6.

Ver. 7. *Remember them who have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation;*

Ver. 8. *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.*] I have read both verses in order to complete the sense; and this, among many others, is an instance of the injudicious division of verses. In the 7th verse, the sense of the original is somewhat obscured by our translation. In the first clause they have rendered *των ἡγουμενων υμων, them who have the rule over you,* as if they had been their rulers at the time of writing this epistle; whereas the original bears no such sense. The apostle is evidently speaking of their former pastors who were now dead as we shall shew presently. The literal translation is, "*Remember ye your guides,* or *leaders.*" Another obscurity arises from their having inverted the order of the original in the latter part of the verse, which runs thus, "*of whose conversation, considering the close* (or exit), *imitate their faith.*" This immediately connects their *faith* with *Jesus Christ*, the object of it, mentioned in the beginning of the next verse. The literal translation and arrangement of the whole verse is as follows, —" Remember your leaders, who have spoken unto you " the word of God: considering the issue (or close) of " their conversation, imitate their faith."

That it is their former leaders now dead, that he here exhorts them to remember and imitate, is evident. They were such as *had spoken* unto them the word of God—whose conversation in this world had come to an end, or close. Besides, the exhortation as to their living pastors comes in afterwards, ver. 17. Some of those he here refers to were no doubt apostles, and others who had sealed their doctrine with their blood.

The word ἡγουμενοι literally signifies *leaders* or *guides;* yet it must be owned that both in the Greek version of the Old Testament, as well as in the New, it signifies those who have a *proper authority* over others, see Mat.

ii. 6. Luke xxii. 26. Acts vii. 10; and in civil matters always signifies a *governor, chief*, or *ruler*. But when applied to pastors, it must be understood in a qualified sense. They have no authority to make any new laws in Christ's house, or to teach any new doctrine besides what is already contained in the word of God; nor even to enforce the doctrines and commandments of Christ by their own authority, but by his sole authority. They are authorised to teach sound doctrine, to reprove, rebuke, exhort with all authority—to lead in the discipline which Christ hath instituted—and to be a pattern to the flock in exemplary conversation; but they have no lordship over God's heritage, 1 Pet. v. 3.

They were to remember their former leaders—1. As to their *doctrine*, and abide by it; for they had spoken unto them *the word of God*.—2. They were to consider their *conversation* in this world, how holy and unblameable it was—how diligent they were in the work of the Lord—what trials they underwent for the cause of Christ—and with what stedfastness and patience they sustained them. —3. They were to consider the *end* or *close* of their conversation. The word (ἐκβασιν) rendered *end*, is translated *way to escape*, 1 Cor. x. 13; it signifies the *issue*, or *outgate* from the surrounding dangers and trials to which they were exposed during their pilgrimage here. They were therefore diligently to consider how faithful they were unto death; what a dying testimony they left behind them to the truth; and what a glorious outgate they got from all their sufferings, when they left this world to be present with the Lord.—4. They are exhorted to follow, or *imitate their faith;* that faith which influenced their conversation, which made them overcome the world, and which supported them under all their trials, and even in death. The object of their faith was

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.] This is a strong argument to imitate their faith: that though they were dead and gone, yet Jesus Christ in

whom these holy men believed, continues still the same to-day as he was then, and shall for ever continue the same all-sufficient Saviour until the end of time; he being able to save unto the last all them that come unto God by him. Seeing, therefore, the object of faith continued unchangeably the same, and was as able, faithful, and merciful to succour, deliver, and reward them, as he did their faithful pastors who had gone before them, they ought to hold fast by the same faith which they had set before them, both by their doctrine and example.

Ver. 9. *Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines,*—] i. e. doctrines *diverse* from what their deceased guides had taught them, who had spoken unto them the word of God; and which are *strange* or foreign to, and inconsistent with, the true doctrine of the gospel; particularly the Jewish doctrines about clean and unclean meats, according as they were, or were not, to be offered on the altar, and consequently extended to the sacrifices, and the whole frame of the Mosaic institution, which had a particular reference to the altar, and was sanctified by it. In opposition to such Jewish doctrines, he says,

—*for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.*] That *the heart be established*, is a Jewish phrase for comforting, strengthening, or refreshing the heart, which is ascribed to food, see Judg. xix. 5, 8. Psal. civ. 15; and as the Hebrews had a strong attachment to the distinction of meats, and the Jewish festivals and eucharistical oblations, he opposes this, by telling them that it was a good thing that the heart be *established with grace*, i. e. the free love and favour of God revealed in the gospel through the sacrifice of Christ, and not with such carnal ordinances as the Jewish meats and drinks, which could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience, ch. ix. 9, 10; and so did not profit, in a spiritual sense, those who had been occupied therein.

Ver. 10. *We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.*] *Altar* is here put for the *sacrifice* offered upon it; a figure of speech very common in scripture. The meaning is, we Christians have a sacrifice to feast upon, viz. the sacrifice of Christ; and of this sacrifice they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle; i. e. the legal service of the tabernacle, which gave the priests a right to live of the altar, 1 Cor. viii. 13. but gives them no title to partake with us of Christ's sacrifice; so far from it, that while they seek acceptance by these sacrifices, they can have no part in this; Christ will profit them nothing, Gal. v. 4. This may be learnt from their sin-offerings on the great day of atonement, which were the most eminent types of Christ's sacrifice.

Ver. 11. *For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high-priest for sin, are burnt without the camp.*] The passage he refers to is Lev. xvi. 27.—"The bullock for the sin-offering, and "the goat for the sin-offering, whose blood was brought "in to make atonement in the holy place, shall one carry "forth without the camp, and they shall burn in the fire "their skins, and their flesh, and their dung." As therefore they were forbidden by the law to eat of the propitiatory sacrifices whose blood was carried within the veil, but were commanded to burn them entirely without the camp, they can have no right, while they adhere to the legal institution, to partake of Christ's sacrifice, which answers to these propitiatory sacrifices, as he shews in the next verse.

Ver. 12. *Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.*] As the bodies in the sin-offerings were carried without the camp of Israel in the wilderness, and wholly burnt, so Jesus, the true sin-offering, answerable to this, suffered without the gate of Jerusalem upon mount Calvary. This he did "that he might sanctify the people with his own "blood," i. e. atone for their sins, and consecrate them

unto God as his peculiar people; and to complete this service he carried his blood into the heavenly sanctuary to present it in the presence of God for them, even as the blood of the sin-offerings was carried by the high-priest into the earthly sanctuary, ch. ix. 12, 24. And thus an end is made of all the legal sacrifice, or any more offering for sin, since by his one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified, having obtained eternal redemption for them.

Ver. 13. *Let us go forth, therefore, unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.*] This exhortation comes beautifully in upon the foregoing doctrine, q. d. Since Christ is the great antitype of all the legal sin-offerings; since the Jews led him out of their city as one unworthy to live in it, and crucified him as a malefactor: since he left their city for ever to redeem us by his blood, and yielded himself a whole burnt-offering for us to God without the gates of Jerusalem, which is now abandoned by him and devoted to destruction, together with its temple and all its sacrificature, let us renounce the world and all that is in it, 1 John ii. 16. even the lawful enjoyments of it, when they come in competition with our adherence to Christ. See what he promises to such, Mark x. 29, 30. Let us break measures with, and disengage ourselves from such religious connections as are not founded on the love of the truth, and unity of the Spirit. Let us cleave unto the Lord with purpose of heart in the joint *visible fellowship* of the saints, Acts xi. 23. We must not steal out of the camp, and hide our heads, as if we were ashamed of the cause in which we are embarked. Our Lord says he will be ashamed of all such; but we must be as a city set on a hill, as golden candlesticks, shining as lights in the world; we must, as it were, visibly encamp on Christ's side, and use no trimming prudential measures to gain esteem, or shun Christ's reproach. He has instituted the ordinance of baptism, as that by which his disciples are to make a public profession of

their faith in him; and to the commission which he delivered unto his apostles to preach his gospel, and baptize such as are taught, is joined the observance of *all things* he hath commanded, Mat. xxviii. 19, 20. Let us stedfastly adhere to his institutions, which are wisely calculated to promote our establishment and growth in the divine life, and promote our disconformity to this present evil world.

Ver. 14. *For here have we no continuing city,—*] That is, there is now no earthly Jerusalem, or fixed place of worship in which God has chosen to place his name—no earthly temple—no earthly priests, sacrifices, &c.—no promise for their continuance and protection; even the churches of the saints upon earth are not to be regarded as continuing cities:

—but we seek one to come.] Heaven itself is the antitype of all these. "Let us therefore set our affections on "things above, and not on things on the earth."

Ver. 15. *By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.*] He had shewn, ver. 12. that Christ had by his own blood sanctified the people, i. e. purged away their sins, and consecrated them unto God. And the first use he makes of this is, that they should leave the communion of the Jewish Church, the earthly Jerusalem and temple service, and go forth to him without the camp bearing his reproach.—Here he makes another use of it, viz. That through him as their great High-priest, they should offer up their services unto God, even as they were wont formerly to do by the mediation of the legal high-priests. They had now no further occasion to bring any more sacrifices for sin, or in order to make expiation, as Christ's sacrifice had fully answered that end; but still they had other sacrifices to offer by their great high-priest; and the first he mentions is the *sacrifice of praise.* "By him, therefore, let us offer "the sacrifice of praise to God continually." This answers to the eucharistical sacrifices of the Jews, which

were offered by the hands of the priest, and consisted both of the fruits of the ground, and of beasts. Here praise and thanksgiving, or confessing to his name, is substituted in place of these, which, in allusion to the beasts offered, is called *the calves of our lips*, Hos. xiv. 2. and here the *fruit of our lips*, alluding to the *first fruits*, which were presented as thank-offerings under the law. And surely it becomes those who have all their iniquity taken away by Christ's sacrifice, to abound in the sacrifice of praise *continually*.

Ver. 16. *But to do good and to communicate forget not*—] The original runs, "Of the well-doing and fel-"lowship be not unmindful." This is another sacrifice which remains for Christians to offer, viz. good and beneficent works, particularly the works of mercy, feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked; "doing good unto "all men, especially them who are of the household of "faith," Gal. vi. 10. and so giving them communion or fellowship with you in your goods. This duty is much spoken of in the New Testament, and will be taken notice of with approbation in the judgment, Mat. xxv. 35, 36.

—*for with such sacrifices God is well-pleased.*] That is, he is well-pleased with the sacrifices of praise and good works. That the sacrifice of praise from a grateful heart is more pleasing to him than slaughtered beasts, see Psal. l. 23. Psal. lxix. 30, 31. and for the sacrifice of good works, see Phil. iv. 18. see for both, 1 Pet. ii. 5.

Ver. 17. *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves*—] Literally, "Be obedient to your "leaders, and submit ye." Here he gives them directions as to the pastors then over them. They were to be obedient to them as an ordinance of Christ for the order and edification of his churches, in so far as they taught them the doctrine and commandments of Christ; for they had not dominion over their faith, but were helpers of their joy, 2 Cor. i. 24. They were to *submit* to their

just authority, not only in receiving with humility their instructions, but also their faithful reproofs, admonitions, and correction upon all proper occasions. The arguments by which he enforces this obedience and submission are:

—*for they watch for your souls as they that must give account: that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you.*] The first argument for obedience and submission to them is the importance of their work and office, "*they watch for your souls.*" You are committed to their care by the chief Shepherd, and they are commanded to watch over you, and to take heed to themselves and to all the flock, Acts xx. 28. inspecting your principles, temper, and conduct, and giving due warning of every spiritual danger that may threaten the hurt of your souls. 2. The account they have to give to Christ, both of their labour, and of its success among you. 3. The *joy* with which they will give an account in that day, if their labours have been successful, 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20. Their *grief*, if all their labour, watchfulness, and care should be lost upon you, and they at last disappointed of their hope of having you for a crown of rejoicing in that day. 4. The dreadful loss this would be to yourselves.

Ver. 18. *Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.*—] He had just been speaking of their duty to their pastors, which naturally led him to think of the importance of the work of the ministry, the many difficulties that attend the faithful discharge of it, their own insufficiency, and their need of divine assistance; and therefore he desires their prayers for such as were employed in that work, and particularly for himself: But as the Hebrews might be prejudiced against him, by the calumnies of Judaizers, on account of his being a zealous defender of the Gentile liberty from the law, and for other reasons, such as his bonds, which might mar their freedom in praying for success to him, he

adds, "for we trust we have a good conscience, in all "things willing to live honestly." q. d. Notwithstanding our names are cast out as evil, and we suffer as if we were evil doers; yet we are conscious of our own sincerity, integrity, and faithfulness in the work of the ministry committed to us. We neither walk in craftiness, nor handle the word of God deceitfully, or for any mean, wicked or selfish end; but "our rejoicing is this, even "the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity, and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace "of God, we have our conversation in the world." 2 Cor. i. 12.

Ver. 19. *But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.*—] Here he begs their united prayers with a particular view to his being restored to them the sooner; which imports that they should pray for his support and direction under present trials—deliverance from the dangers to which he was exposed—success to the services in which he was engaged—that so when he had done his work in those parts, every difficulty might be removed out of his way in coming to them. Perhaps the case with him was much the same as he describes, Rom. xv. 20, 22—24, 30—32.

Ver. 20. *Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.*—] The apostle addresses this prayer to God the Father under the endearing character of *the God of peace;* which imports that he is *fully pacified* and *reconciled* through the atoning blood of his Son; and also, that he is the *author* and *giver of peace* and happiness to men, both with himself and one another. So the apostle says, he is the *author* of peace in all the churches of the saints, 1 Cor. xiv. 33. and prays for the Thessalonians, that the Lord of peace himself may *give* them peace always, 2 Thess. iii. 16.

He farther characterises God as having *brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus.* This shews him to be

the God of peace, and that he was fully satisfied and well-pleased with the atonement which Christ made in his death, and that he demanded no more, for his resurrection was a complete discharge; and as he was delivered to death for our offences, so he was raised again by the God of peace for our justification, Rom. iv. 25. So that in bringing Christ from the dead, he shews himself reconciled to all for whom he died. And when men believe in Christ's death and resurrection, then they receive the atonement, and have peace with God.

He styles Jesus Christ, who was brought again from the dead, *that great Shepherd of the Sheep.* He is frequently prophesied of under that character, Isa. xl. 11. Ezek. xxxiv. 23. and applies it to himself, John x. 11. The *sheep* are all those whom the Father *gave* unto him, ver. 29. consisting not only of the Jews, but also of the Gentiles, ver. 16.—They are those for whom he *laid down his life,* at the Father's commandment, ver. 15, 17, 18.—such as *hear* and *know* his voice, and follow him, ver. 27. And to them he gives eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hand, ver. 28.

Now this great Shepherd having laid down his life for the sheep, bearing the iniquities of them all, therefore did the Father love him, and, as the God of peace, bring him again form the dead,

—through the blood of the everlasting covenant.—] Expositors are not agreed about the connection of this clause with what goes before. Some understand it to mean, that Christ *became* the great Shepherd of the sheep, by means of his voluntary oblation of himself, or by the blood of the everlasting covenant, i. e. purchased for himself the authority of chief Shepherd, over the church, by his blood. But though it be true that Christ purchased the sheep with his blood, Acts xx. 28. and was exalted, on account of his sufferings, as head over all things to his church, Philip. ii. 8—11. yet he does not seem to have

been *made* the Shepherd on that account. In the days of his flesh he declares himself to be the good Shepherd, John x. 11. It was the Shepherd that was smitten, Mat. xxvi. 31. that laid down his life, John x. 15. and that was brought again from the dead, as here; therefore he stood in that relation to his church before his resurrection. Others render the words (ἐν αἵματι) *with the blood,* and so understand the sense to be this,—that God brought Christ again from the dead *together with* his blood, that as high-priest he might offer it in the heavenly sanctuary, as in chap. ix 12. But though this is a truth in itself, I do not think it is the precise thing here meant. I take it, that this whole verse is just a periphrasis for, God the Father as the God of peace, including the way in which he has manifested himself to be so, viz. in raising our Lord Jesus from the dead, *through, in* or *by* the blood of the everlasting covenant; i. e. through the worth or merit of it. Christ's blood is termed *the blood of the everlasting covenant,* in distinction from the blood of slain beasts, which ratified and established the old covenant made at Sinai. These sacrifices could not procure remission of sins and eternal life; but the blood of Christ hath obtained both; for God hath brought him again from the dead through that blood. The covenant itself is also called *everlasting,* because it will never wax old, or vanish away, like the Sinai covenant, chap. viii. 13. Having thus characterised God as the God of peace, and bestower of eternal life from the dead; he proceeds next to the subject matter of his request:

Ver. 21. *Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*] The word (καταρτισαι) here rendered *make you perfect* is variously translated elsewhere, such as *prepared,* ch. x. 5.—*framed,* ch. xi. 3.—fitted, Rom. ix. 22.—*restore,* Gal. vi. 1.—and *perfectly joined together,*

1 Cor. i. 10. It signifies to set things to rights, and reduce them to their proper state that were out of order, and so prepare and fit them for use. It is therefore a prayer that God would prepare, fit and dispose them for every good work he calls them to perform, that they may be always ready, cheerful, and active in doing his will from the heart, Eph. vi. 6.

—*working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight.*] It is plain from this, and many other passages of Scripture, that God worketh in his people every good work that is well-pleasing in his sight, and that not only in the conversion of a sinner, but in all the growth and improvement of a Christian in the spiritual life. It is he that enlightens the eyes of their understanding in the knowledge of him, Eph. i. 17, 18.—that enlarges their views of the love of Christ, chap. iii. 16, 20.—that worketh in them to will and to do of his good pleasure, Phil. ii. 13. The holy tempers and spiritual affections of the soul are the fruits of the Spirit, Gal. v. 22, 23. But then, 2. He works in us as rational creatures by means of the revelation he hath given us, enlightening our judgments by its doctrine, strengthening our faith by its evidence, moving our wills by its motives, and so influencing our affections and obedience. The Spirit therefore does not work upon us abstract from the word, but in and by it, making it to produce it effects. 3. God's working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, does not supersede our *activity*, or make us *passive;* on the contrary it is an exciting of us both to will and to do, which is inconsistent with our being passive. 4. That as God works in his people that which is well pleasing in his sight, so we should apply to him for his Spirit, depend upon his assistance in every thing he requires, and give him the glory, like Paul; "yet not I, but the grace of "God which was with me,"—"yet not I, but Christ liveth "in me." 5. Lastly, we should look for acceptance alone through the merits and mediation of Christ even in such

things as we do agreeable to his will; for they are *well pleasing in his sight* only *through Jesus Christ,*

—*To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*] It is not clear whether this doxology is to be referred to *the God of peace* to whom the prayer is addressed, or to *Jesus Christ* who is last mentioned. It appears to me most probable that it refers to the former. But it is certain that in other places glory is ascribed to each separately, and to both together, see Phil. iv. 20. Rev. i. 5, 6. ch. v. 13. and therefore it is not material to which of them we refer it here, since it belongs to both.

Ver. 22. *And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words.*] Here he appears anxious that they should take in good part all the instructions, exhortations, and cautions which he has given them in this epistle, and that they should lay aside their Jewish prejudices and fall in with them. He *beseeches* them as his brethren to suffer the word of exhortation, using this argument, "for I have "written a letter unto you in few words." It is indeed longer than some other of his epistles; yet considering the great variety, extensiveness and importance of the subjects he treats of, he might well say he had wrote to them concisely, or *in few words;* and therefore they ought not to think it tedious or irksome to attend unto it.

Ver. 23. *Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty: with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.*] It appears from this that Timothy had been in bonds. Historians inform us that he was imprisoned at Rome in the 7th year of Nero, and set at liberty during the 8th. It also appears that he was not with the apostle when he wrote this Epistle, for he says "with whom if he come "shortly, I will see you." It is not certain that ever Paul or Timothy visited the Jewish believers in Judea as was intended; though Chrysostom says, that Paul being set at liberty went to Spain, from thence to Judea, and afterwards returned to Rome.

Ver. 24. *Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.*] From this it is evident, that this epistle was not sent to their pastors in Judea, but to the believing Jews in general in those parts; for they are desired to give his Christian salutations to their rulers. It is likely it was delivered first to some particular church, probably to that at Jerusalem, to be communicated to the rest, and who are desired to give his salutations *to all the saints.* He also sends them the salutations of the saints at Italy, no doubt by their particular desire; for we are not to look upon it as an empty compliment.

Ver. 25. *Grace be with you all. Amen.*] That is, may the free favour of God, with all its gracious and happy effects everattend you! *Amen,* i. e. So let it be; an Hebrew word.

We are told in the Postscript, that this Epistle was "written to the Hebrews from Italy" by "Timothy." It is indeed probable that it was written from Italy, from ver. 24. but that it was sent by Timothy is evidently a mistake. Timothy was not with the apostle when he wrote this Epistle, and he promises that if Timothy came shortly, he would come with him, and see them, which does not consist with his sending him with this Epistle. The postscripts to the Epistles are not canonical, but were added by modern and unskilful hands.

END OF THE PARAPHRASE AND COMMENTARY.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

ON THE DOUBLE SENSE OF PROPHECY,

Referred to in Chap. i. 5. *Note (b.)*

THAT there are several prophecies and promises in the Old Testament, which had a literal respect to, and an actual accomplishment in, the affairs of the Jewish church and kingdom, must be obvious to every reader. And it is equally obvious, that the inspired apostles of Christ gave another sense to the same prophecies or promises, and apply them to Christ and the affairs of his kingdom. It must, therefore, be very important to understand the principle upon which such prophecies are constructed, so as to bear a twofold sense and application to things so different in their nature. The following observations may, perhaps, throw some light on this subject. Let it therefore be observed :—

1st. That the Jewish economy, both in church and state, was a prefiguration of Christ's church and kingdom, is what must be admitted by all who own the divine inspiration of the writers of the New Testament; for these

writers frequently refer to it, not merely by way of accommodation or illustration of their subject, but as what was originally intended of God to adumbrate or typify the spiritual dispensation of the Messiah. They inform us, in general, that four hundred and thirty years after the gospel promise was confirmed of God respecting Christ to Abraham, the Mosaic law was given to his descendants: not as a detached, perfect, and independent system by itself, but as an introductory and intermediate dispensation until that promise should be accomplished, and with a view to the faith that should afterwards be revealed, Gal. iii. 16—24;—that it was intended as a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ, ver. 24;—and that Christ is the end of that law, Rom. x. 4. That the design of that constitution, which was framed and established by means of the faithful ministry of Moses, was "for a tes-"timony of those things which were to be spoken after," namely, under the gospel, Heb. iii. 5—that the law had a shadow of good things to come, ch. x. 1—and that the body or substance of that shadow is Christ, Col. ii. 17.

They also condescend on particulars, such as that under the promise of the earthly inheritance, the patriarchs understood and expected a better country, that is, an heavenly one, Heb. xi. 8, 9, 10, 16. That the sacrifices of the law, particularly, were a shadow of good things to come, and so were set aside by the sacrifice of Christ, Heb. x. 1, 9—that the tabernacle, and all that pertained to it, was an example and shadow of heavenly things—a figure referring to the present time, patterns of things in the heavens—figures of the true tabernacles of which Christ is a minister, and which the Lord pitched, and not man, Heb. viii. 2, 5. ch. ix. 9, 23, 24;—that the entry of the high-priest alone, within the second vail, and that but once every year, was intended by the Holy Spirit to signify that the way into the holiest of all was not made manifest while the first tabernacle was yet standing, Heb. ix. 7, 8. This also proves that the Aaronical priesthood

prefigured the priesthood of Christ; for if the place in which the legal high-priest officiated was a pattern or figure of the true tabernacle whereof Christ is minister; and if the sacrifices which they offered were a shadow of good things to come, as has been shewn, it is plain that they themselves must have been types of Christ in his priestly office. The kingdom of David was also a type of the kingdom of the Messiah; and so David and Solomon, (who sat on the throne of Jehovah over Israel, 1 Chron. xviii. 5. ch. xxix. 23.) were set up as types of him in his royal character. Why else is the Messiah himself so often called *David* in prophecy, Jer. xxx. 9. Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24. Hos. iii. 5. but because he was to be the antitype of David? And how is the promise fulfilled that he should sit on the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, Isa. ix. 7. or that the Lord God would give unto him the throne of his father David, Luke i. 32. if David's throne and kingdom had not typified his? for it is certain he never sat upon David's earthly throne.

2d. As the main design of the Jewish economy was to prefigure the future dispensation of the Messiah, and stood related to it as an introductory and subordinate part of one great connected scheme, so there are several promises and prophecies which are constructed upon that principle, and involve in them things relating both to the type and antitype. These are what are called prophecies of a *double sense*. In their *letter* or *literal sense*, they respected the affairs of the Jewish church and state which were typical; but in their *spirit*, or *spiritual sense*, they were predictions of what the types themselves prefigured, viz. Christ and the affairs of his kingdom. Some of the prophecies, indeed, though expressed in figures borrowed from Jewish affairs, had no respect to them, but referred entirely to gospel times; but those of them which are formed upon the principle we are now speaking of, had a respect to both. Thus the promise made to Abraham of

a numerous seed, Gen. xv. 5. includes both his natural and his spiritual seed, Rom. iv. 18. Gal. iii. 7, 22; and the promise of the earthly possession to the former, Gen. xv. 7, 18. contained the pledge of the heavenly inheritance to the latter, Rom. iv. 13—18. Heb. ix. 15. ch. xi. 9, 10, 16. Thus also the promises of the restoration of the Jews from captivity, with their settlement and prosperity in their own land, were in some measure literally accomplished in those events; but it is evident from the promises themselves that they greatly exceed any temporal deliverance of the Jews, and comprehend the spiritual blessings of the new covenant, see Jer. xxiii. 5, 9. ch. xxxi. and xxxiii.

This double sense of prophecy seems implied in what the angel says to John, viz. "The testimony of Jesus is "the spirit of prophecy," Rev. xix. 10. On this we observe,

1st, That though prophecy may be delivered in figurative language, and have a literal meaning answerable to the letter of the figure, yet it has also a *spirit* or spiritual sense, which is the main thing intended.

2d, That this spirit of prophecy, *is the testimony of Jesus*, or concerning Jesus, i. e. the great design and ultimate object of the prophetic dispensation, is to bear witness or give testimony to Jesus. This Peter also declares, "To him gave all the prophets witness," Acts x. 43. Hence the inspired apostles, seldom, if ever, take any notice of the letter of such prophecies as have a double sense, but apply them solely and directly to the Messiah and his kingdom, according to their true spirit and ultimate design.

3d, That the promise made unto David, and to which our apostle refers, must be explained according to the principle above stated, is abundantly evident, both from the promise itself and from the succeeding prophecies which refer to it. The principal part of the promise is in these words, "Furthermore, I tell thee that the Lord will

" build thee an house. And it shall come to pass, when " the days be expired that thou must go to be with thy " fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which " shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom. " He shall build me an house, and I will establish his " throne for ever. I will be his Father, and he shall be " my son. If he commit," or rather, *whosoever shall commit*,* " iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of " men, and with the stripes of the children of men: but " I will not take my mercy away from him, as I took it " from him that was before thee. But I will settle him in " mine house, and in my kingdom for ever; and his throne " shall be established for evermore."—2 Sam. vii. 11—17. 1 Chron. xvii. 10—15.

It is plain that this promise has a respect to David's natural offspring who should succeed him in the government of the earthly kingdom; for David applies it to his son Solomon, 1 Chron. xxii. 6—11. ch. xxviii. 5—8; and so does the Lord himself, 2 Chron. vii. 17, 18. It contains a threatening against any of David's children, or royal successors, who should commit iniquity, which was verified in the punishment inflicted upon his transgressing seed, as the succeeding history abundantly shews. And this promise to David was frequently pleaded by the Jewish church, when the judgments inflicted upon David's temporal house and kingdom seemed to make it void, see Psal. lxxxix. and cxxxii.

But it is equally evident that this notable promise

* The Hebrew relative pronoun *asher* frequently signifies *whosoever*, or *he who*, as is well observed by Mr. Peirce; but here it refers, not to the children of the Messiah, as he supposes, but to whosoever of David's children as should succeed him on the throne: see Psal. lxxxix. 30, 31, 32. Accordingly, many of them did commit iniquity, and were chastised with the rod of men, and at last deprived of the sovereignty; for to them the promise was conditional.—From these transgressing children of David, Christ is distinguished as a righteous Branch.—Jer. xxiii. 5.

chiefly respected the Messiah, who was to spring of the royal seed of David according to the flesh, and to rise again from the dead to sit on his heavenly throne: for,

(1.) The Lord promises to the person here spoken of, "He shall be my Son." This cannot apply to Solomon in any distinguished sense but as a type, nor was he usually called the Son of God; but the Father, by a voice from the excellent glory, owned and proclaimed Jesus to be his beloved Son, Mat. iii. 17. ch. xvii. 5. 2 Pet. i. 17. and by this name he is distinguished throughout the whole of the New Testament, it being a name above every name, and which shows him superior not only to mortals, but to the highest angels.

(2.) He says, "I will settle him in mine house, and in "my kingdom for ever, and his throne shall be established "for evermore." Solomon was but a mortal man, and his throne and kingdom were temporal, and came to an end; therefore this promise was never strictly or fully accomplished in him. But long after his death it is renewed, and applied to him who is styled the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace, in these words, "Of the increase of his government and peace "there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and "upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with "judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for "ever," Isa. ix. 6, 7; see also Luke i. 32, 33.

(3.) David himself understood that a greater than Solomon was intended in this promise. This appears from his last words, where having mentioned the Lord's description of a King after his own heart, he says, "Although "my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with "me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and "sure; for this is all my salvation and all my desire, al-"though he make it not to grow," 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. These words plainly intimate, that David's hopes were not very sanguine respecting his temporal house; yet this did not

shake his faith in God's promise, which he terms, "an "everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure:" and places all his salvation and all his desire in it, in the near prospect of leaving this world. He must, therefore, have understood it to be a promise of the Messiah who was to come of his seed; and that he did so understand it the apostle Peter expressly declares, "Therefore, being "a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an "oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to "the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; "he, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, "that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did "see corruption," Acts ii. 30, 31.

(4.) Many succeeding prophecies concerning the Messiah refer back to the original promise made unto David, and so demonstrate that he was the great object of that promise. The posterity of David were deprived of the government at the Babylonish captivity, and none of them ever after sat upon the throne of that earthly kingdom: yet, about that time, the Lord, by the prophet Jeremiah, renewed the promise which he had made unto David, with redoubled assurances that he would perform that good thing which he had promised, by causing the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and that day and night should sooner cease than he would break his covenant with David his servant, that he should never want a Son to reign upon his throne, Jer. xxxiii. 14—26. This Son could be no other than Christ. Again, the Messiah is often promised under the name *David*, see Jer. xxx. 9. Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24. ch. xxxvii. 24, 25. Hos. iii. 5. The erection of his kingdom is described as a raising up the tabernacle of David that had fallen down, and closing up the breaches thereof, Amos ix. 11. Acts xv. 16, 17. His throne is termed the throne of his father David, Isa. ix. 7. Luke i. 32. And the peace and prosperity of his reign is often represented by images bor-

rowed from the reign of Solomon, when the kingdom of Israel was in its greatest glory, Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. Micah iv. 3, 4. with 1 Kings iv. 25. Now as these and many other prophecies refer to a period when the reign of the temporal house of David was to be at an end, they can have no respect to any of his natural posterity, but must apply solely to his Son the Messiah; and as they also refer to, and are renewals of the promise made unto David, they clearly prove that the Messiah was chiefly intended in that promise.

(5.) Lastly, the writings of the New Testament not only explain the promise made unto David of the Messiah, but apply it directly and solely to Jesus. The angel foretelling his birth, and referring to this promise, says to his mother, "He shall be great, and shall be called the "Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto "him the throne of his father David. And he shall reign "over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom "there shall be no end," Luke i. 32, 33. Peter, full of the Holy Spirit, explains it to be God's oath to David, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; and applies it to Jesus who had been crucified, but now raised from the dead, and exalted at the right hand of God, being made both Lord and Christ, Acts ii. 30—37. And Paul, referring to the renewal of the same promise in Isa. lv. 3. says, "Of this man's (David's) seed, hath God, accord-"ing to his promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus. "And, as concerning that he raised him up from the "dead, now no more to return to corruption, he saith on "this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David," Acts xiii. 23, 24.

From the whole it is clear, that though the promise made unto David had a reference to Solomon and his successors on the throne of Israel as types of Christ, yet that Christ himself was the great and ultimate object of

that promise, as well as of the succeeding prophecies connected with it; and consequently, that the inspired author of this epistle to the Hebrews cites it with great propriety, to prove that Christ possesses a more excellent name than angels.

No. II.

ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF ANGELS PREVIOUS TO CHRIST'S RESURRECTION AND EXALTATION.

Referred to in Chap. ii. 5.

For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.

We have already explained the meaning of the phrase, *the world to come.* It is that new state of things which commenced at the resurrection and exaltation of Christ, when he was vested with all power in heaven and on earth, and which he will continue to exercise till he hath judged the world, and delivered up the kingdom to God even the Father, 1 Cor. xv. 24. The apostle says that the world to come is that of which he speaks in this epistle; now, that which the apostle treats of is the gospel state under the reign of Christ, as contrasted with the former state of things under the Jewish economy.

When the apostle says, "Unto the angels hath he not "put in subjection the world to come," or gospel economy, it plainly supposes that the former world or state of things, was put in subjection to them, and in some sort under their government and administration; otherwise there would have been no occasion to guard the Jews against such a supposition with respect to the gospel state. To clear this matter let it be considered,

1st. That the apostle, in this and the former chapter, is evidently stating a comparison betwixt the administrations in the Jewish and gospel dispensations, i. e. betwixt the angels as acting in the former, and Christ as acting in the latter. He shews that Christ, in consequence of his

exaltation, is made as much superior to the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they, ch. i. 4, 5. and that he is exalted to greater honour, power, and dominion than ever was conferred upon any of them; for in constituting them thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, to which of them said he at any time, "Sit thou "at my right hand," &c. ver. 13. And his argument for giving more earnest heed to the gospel, is drawn from the dignity and excellency of Christ by whom it was spoken in person, above the angels who delivered the law, ch. ii. 1, 4. Now if the angels had no more authority under the former dispensation than they have at present, why does the apostle speak of the *world to come* as not being subject to them any more than the former world was? Again, if Christ in person was the administrator in the former economy (as many suppose); if he delivered the law to Israel, and was the angel of God's presence who guided them through the wilderness into the earthly rest, then where is the argument for giving more earnest heed to the gospel, which the apostle draws from the superior dignity of the speaker? If the speaker be the same in both dispensations, it will only follow that we should give equal heed to both; but will never infer that we should be more attentive on that account to the gospel. Both the opposition, and the argument formed on it would, upon that supposition be lost. But,

2dly, It is plain from the New Testament, that the delivery of the law to Israel was part of the angelic administration. Stephen says they received it by the disposition of angels, Acts vii. 53. That it was an angel of the Lord that appeared unto Moses in a flame of fire in the bush, ver. 30. and that spake unto him in the mount Sinai, and delivered to him the lively oracles to give unto them, ver. 38. Paul says, the law was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator, Gal. iii. 19; and in this chapter he calls it the word spoken by angels, ver. 2. It may be thought difficult to reconcile this with the Old Testament

account of it, where we are told expressly, that "God "spake all these words," Exod. xx. 1. But this difficulty is not peculiar to the giving of the law; for,

3dly, Many things which are directly ascribed to Jehovah in one place, are in another place said to be done by angels. Thus, he who spake unto Hagar is called *the angel of the Lord;* yet it is said, "She called the name of "Jehovah that spake unto her, "Thou God seest me," Gen. xvi. 11, 13. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is directly ascribed to *Jehovah*, Gen. xix. 24. yet the angels say to Lot, "*Jehovah* hath sent *us* to destroy it," ver. 13. The plagues inflicted upon Egypt were attributed to Jehovah, see Exod. vii. to xiii. Psal. lxxviii. 43—52. yet *Jehovah* is distinguished from the *destroyer*, Exod. xii. 23; and we are told the Lord did these things, "by sending evil angels among them," Psal. lxxviii. 49. The redemption of Israel out of Egypt is almost every where ascribed to Jehovah's immediate hand, Exod. xiii. 16; and this is asserted in the very preface of their law, ch. xx. 2. yet Moses ordered his messengers to say to the king of Edom, "When we cried unto the Lord he heard "our voice, and sent an *angel*, and hath brought us forth "out of Egypt," Num. xx. 16. Jehovah is said to "go "before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them in "the way; and by night in a pillar of fire to give them "light," Exod. xiii. 21; yet this is said to be done by the *angel of God*, ch. xiv. 19; and this angel is afterwards promised to bring them into the place prepared for them, ch. xxiii. 20—24. So in like manner in delivering the law, the Lord is said to *speak* with Moses, Exod. xix. 9. to *speak all these words*, ch. xx. 1. to *talk* with Israel from heaven, ver. 22; yet we have already seen that the word was *spoken by angels*, Heb. ii. 2; that it was an *angel* that spake to Moses in the mount Sinai, and delivered him the lively oracles, Acts vii. 38, 53. Now, how shall we reconcile these different passages? We cannot say that a created angel was Jehovah, or that Je-

hovah was his own angel; neither will the apostle's argument (as has been shewn) permit us to say, that any of these angels was the Son of God in person. We must, therefore admit that the law was delivered by created angels, who spoke, as the mouth as it were, in the person of Jehovah; or, in other words, Jehovah spake and acted in and by the ministry of angels. To clear this a little farther, together with the government of angels in the former state of things, let it be noticed,

4thly, That the Old Testament angels are called *Elohim*, i. e. *Gods*, Psal. xcvii. 7. with Heb. i. 6. As this is a name of the true God, it cannot be given to angels in respect of nature, but in respect of the power, dominion, and authority, which was given them as God's representatives; and in this sense the rulers of Israel are also called Gods, Exod. xxii. 28. Psal. lxxxii. 1, 6. The Lord said to Moses, "Thou shalt be to Aaron (Belohim) instead of "God," Exod. iv. 16. Again, "See I have made thee "(Elohim) *a God* unto Pharaoh," chap. vii. 1. i. e. by giving him authority to speak to him as God's mouth. But the angels were made Gods in a higher sense than human rulers; and they were set over them, and stood, as it were, betwixt them and God.

5thly, Among the angels who delivered the law, there appears to be one more eminent, and invested with higher authority than the rest, who is called *the angel of Jehovah's presence*, or face, Isa. lxiii. 9. This distinguished angel spoke in the very person of Jehovah. When he appeared to Moses in the burning bush, he spoke as the voice of God, saying, "I am the God of thy fathers," &c. Exod. iii. 6. This is the particular angel which Stephen mentions as delivering to Moses the lively oracles of the law, Acts vii. 38; and who, on that occasion, spoke as the mouth of Jehovah, saying, "I am the Lord thy God," &c. Exod. xx. 23. This is he whom he sent to bring them out of Egypt, Num. xx. 16. that went before the camp of Israel, Exod. xiv. 19. of whom the Lord speaks particularly,

Exod. xxiii. 20—28. ch. xxxii. 34. ch. xxxiii. 2, 3. and who appeared to Joshua with a sword drawn in his hand, and styles himself the *captain*, or prince, of the host of the Lord, Josh. v. 13, 14. Who he was we shall afterwards consider.

6thly, Abstract from this angel there was a visible emblem of the Divine Majestic presence. This emblem had the appearance of a flame of fire, or a clear shining light, and is called *the glory of the Lord*, Exod. xl. 34. Thus the Lord appeared to Abraham, Gen. xv. 17. to Moses in the bush, Exod. iii. 2. to Israel in the cloud, ch. xiii. 21, 22. on the mount, ch. xix. 18. in the tabernacle, ch. xl. 34, 35. and in the temple, 2 Chron. v. 14. But we are not to imagine that this glory was the very uncreated essence of the invisible God; for it is expressly declared, "that no man hath seen God at any time," John i. 18. 1 John iv. 12. "Ye have neither heard his voice at any "time, nor seen his shape," John v. 37. "Not that any "man hath seen the Father," John vi. 46. This light is called the *shechina*, which signifies his *dwelling*; and so he is said to "dwell in the light, which no man can ap-"proach unto, whom no man hath seen or can see," 1 Tim. vi. 16. Israel saw no manner of similitude, when the Lord spake unto them in Horeb, and so they are forbidden to make any image of God, Deut. iv. 12, 15, 16. They saw the mountain burning with *fire*, attended with *clouds* and thick darkness. Out of the midst of this they heard three kinds of voices,—the voice of a *trumpet*, the voice of *thunder*, which is called the voice of God, Psal. xxix. 3, 9. and the articulate *voice of words*, delivering the law. And though Jehovah, who fills immensity, was in a peculiar manner present there, Psal. lxviii. 17, yet none either saw his shape, nor (except in vision) any personal similitude of him, but the shechina; nor heard his voice, but by means of the elements, and his angelic ministers.

7thly, The distinguished angel whom I mentioned before, who is called the angel of the Lord's presence, of whom the Lord says "my name is in him," and who calls himself the *captain* or *prince* of the Lord's host, Jos. v. 13, 14. appears to me to be *Michael.* My reason for it is this, that in Dan. x. 3. *Michael* is called *one of the chief princes;* and he is particularly denominated to Daniel, "*Michael your prince,*" ver. 21. "The *great prince,* "which standeth for the children of thy people," ch. xii. 1. Michael thus was the prince of Israel; and that he had the charge of Israel in the wilderness seems pretty evident from Jude 9. where we are told he contended with the devil, and "*disputed about the body of Moses.*" In this place he is also called the archangel, i. e. the chief angel; being not only the *prince* of the Lord's host, Josh. v. 13, 14. but chief over the other angels that were employed about that people, see Rev. xii. 7. That Michael was not Christ seems evident from what Jude says of him, that "he durst not bring against Satan a railing "accusation, but said, the Lord rebuke thee," see also 2 Pet. ii. 11. The angel Gabriel was also engaged about Israel during their captivity, Dan. ix. 21; he and Michael assisted each other, and held together in working their deliverance, ch. ix. 13, 21; but Michael had the chief charge of them, as appears from ch. xii. 1.

8thly, This government of angels was not, it seems, peculiar to Israel. The Seventy give the following translation of Deut. xxxii. 8:—"When the Almighty divided "the nations, he set the borders of them *according to the* "*number of the angels of God;*" which seems to intimate that he placed angels over the different nations into which the earth was divided. Accordingly in Daniel, Michael is called *one of the chief princes,* ch. x. 13, which implies that there were *other* chief princes of the angelic kind; that as he was the prince of Israel, ver. 21. so we read of

the *prince of Persia*, ver. 13, 20. and the *prince of Grecia*, ver. 20.*

9thly, All those appearances in the likeness of men which we read of in the Old Testament were made by angels, as the Scriptures tell us expressly, in most instances mentioned. Men entertained angels unawares, but we no where read that they entertained the Son of God, Heb. xiii. 1. Thus it appears that the former state of things was subjected to angels, who are therefore called thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers; but unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, but unto the Son.

* This view of the government of angels previous to the reign of the Messiah, was not only held by the Jews, but by the primitive fathers, such as Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Athenagoras, the two Clements, and Eusebius.

No. III.

ON THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE EXERCISE OF CHRIST'S OFFICE AS HIGH PRIEST.

Referred to in chap. viii. 4.

For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing there are priests that offer gifts according to the law.

WITH respect to the time when Christ was actually made an high-priest, or at least began to officiate as such, I would observe, (1.) That as Aaron, his type, was not actually an high-priest, nor could take that office upon himself till he was expressly called to it of God, and consecrated according to his directions, (see Exod. xxviii. 1. ch. xxix. Lev. viii.) so the apostle referring to this says, "Even so Christ glorified not himself to be made an "high-priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, "this day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in ano-"ther place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of "Melchisedec." Heb. v. 4, 5, 6. These passages are cited for the express purpose of shewing Christ's appointment to the priesthood, and they mark the time when he was actually vested in that office; for the first passage, viz. Psal. ii. 7. is applied to his resurrection from the dead, Acts xiii. 33. and connected with his sitting down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, and exaltation above angels.—Heb. i. 3, 4, 5. As to the other passage, viz. Psal cx. 4. it is the word of the oath whereby he was made an high-priest, (Heb. vii. 20, 21, 28.) and connects with these words, "Sit thou at my right hand until I make

"thine enemies thy footstool," ver. 1. and so must signify his being a heavenly and everlasting high-priest when divested of mortality by a resurrection.—(2.) This is further evident from the apostle's commentary on Psal. cx. 4. in the viith chapter of his epistle to the Hebrews, where he shows, that the word of the oath which constituted Christ a priest *for ever* after the order of Melchisedec, made him a priest, "after the power of an endless life," ver. 16. and so no more subject to death as in the days of his flesh, or like the mortal dying sons of Aaron, ver. 23, 24; but distinguished from them by his *continuing ever—ever living*, ver. 24, 25. and made higher than the heavens, ver. 26. Then he gives the sum of all he had said on this passage in the beginning of the next chapter. "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: "we have such an high priest, who is set on the right "hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a mi-"nister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle which "the Lord pitched and not man. For every high priest "is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices; wherefore it is "of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer," viz. in the heavenly sanctuary; for he immediately adds, "For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, see-"ing there are priests that offer gifts according to the "law." Heb. viii. 1—5. Indeed, throughout the whole of this epistle to the Hebrews, Christ is never represented officiating as high priest but in his resurrection state, see ch. iv. 14. ch. vi. 20. ch. vii. 26. ch. viii. 1, 2, 4. ch. ix. 11, 12, 24. ch. x. 12, 13, 19, 20, 21.—(3.) Aaron was vested in the high priest's office, by the bood of the ram of consecration, Lev. viii. 22, 25. This in Hebrew is termed the *ram of fillings*, and in the Greek translation, *the ram of perfection;* hence to *consecrate* a priest is in Hebrew to *fill his hand*, and in Greek to *perfect* him, Exod. xxviii. 41. xxix. Thus the priests are consecrated to their office both by applying blood to them, and *filling their hands* with parts of the sacrifices, Exod. xxviii. 19, 25. and by

this they were *perfected*, and thoroughly fitted to appear before the Lord, and minister to him with acceptance. So Christ was consecrated to the office of high priest through sufferings or the blood of his own sacrifice; for God is said "to *make* the captain of our salvation *perfect* through sufferings," Heb. ii. 10. i. e. to consecrate him to that office by his sufferings; for the word which is translated to *make perfect* is the same that is used to signify the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priest's office. It is used in the same sense, chap. v. 8, 9, 10. "Yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffer-"ed: and being *made perfect*, he became the author of "eternal salvation to all them that obey him, called (or "denominated) of God an high priest after the order of "Melchisedec:" and the same word is rendered consecrated in chap. vii. 28. Now if Christ was consecrated to the priesthood by his own blood, then he must have suffered in order to his consecration, and before his hand could be filled to enter into the holy heavenly place, with his offering, Heb. viii. 3, 4. Upon the whole, though Christ suffered on earth, giving his life a ransom for many; sustaining the curse of the law in our stead, and bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, yet it does not appear from scripture that in this he acted in the character of high priest, but of a voluntary substituted sacrifice; for he was not consecrated to be a priest upon earth, but to present his offering and minister in the heavenly sanctuary, chap. viii. 2, 5. ch. ix. 11, 12, 13, 24. Yet I would not contend with those of a different opinion on this head, because it is not essential to the faith whether we consider him acting as a priest at his death, or not till he rose from the dead, if we only keep in view the person who died, and the end for which he died.

No. IV.

ILLUSTRATION OF CHAP. XII. 6—11.

For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected *us*, and we gave *them* reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened *us* after their own pleasure; but he for *our* profit, that *we* might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

To illustrate this subject, I shall,

I. Mention some of the many afflictions of God's children.

II. The salutary use and design of them.

III. The consolation which the scripture gives under them.

I. There are various troubles and afflictions which the children of God are liable to in this world in common with other men, 1 Cor. x. 13. being inseparable from this state of sin and mortality to which they are subjected by the original apostacy, Gen. iii. 17, 18, 19. Eliphaz observes, that "Although affliction cometh not forth of the "dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground, yet "man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upwards." Job v. 6, 7. q. d. Though afflictions do not come in a

certain, stated, and regular course of nature, as plants spring up in the season, nor are merely accidental and casual; but are sent, directed and managed by a special, wise and gracious Providence; yet they are so common to men, so incident to every age, sex, degree, and condition of life, that they seem as universal and unavoidable as the natural propensity in the spark to fly upwards. These afflictions are either,

(1.) In their own persons, such as—Distress of body or mind.—2. In their character or good name, which is rather to be chosen than riches.—3. In their condition or circumstances in life, such as losses, toil, poverty, want, &c. Or,

(2.) In the persons, character or condition of such as are near and dear to them, or in the loss of them by death. This is often as sharp an affliction as any thing that can befall our own persons, and is in proportion to the degree of sympathy and affection we had for, or happiness and pleasure we had in them. The pleasures of a virtuous friendship are great, especially if it is strengthened by the ties of nature and religion. It is one of the most noble enjoyments of life. The greater the number of friends, the greater must be the communication of comfort, as we partake in all their joys. But then our afflictions will increase in a greater proportion; for as men's lives are generally fuller of crosses than comforts, and as we must necessarily participate in the troubles as well as happiness of our friends, as every bitter arrow that wounds them must glance upon us: it follows, that our wounds will be the more *numerous* by how much the more friends and relations we have, and the *deeper* by how much the dearer and nearer they are to us.

2. There are afflictions which attend the profession and obedience of the gospel in its purity, in opposition to the traditions of men, and conformity to this present evil world. These are called afflictions for the word's sake, Mark iv. 17.—afflictions of the gospel, 2 Tim. i. 8.—

afflictions of Christ, Col. i. 24.—persecution for righteousness sake, Matt. v. 10. This arises from the original enmity put betwixt the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, which enmity and division our Lord declares should more fully appear under the gospel than ever it did before, when his disciples should not only be hated and persecuted of all nations, but a man's foes should be even those of his own houshold. The world hates the children of God—because they are conformed to Christ —because they are not of the world, nor conformed to it in sentiment or practice—because they testify that its works are evil—and because they separate from it in religious fellowship, and thereby practically declare its state and danger, and exhibit the kingdom of Christ as distinct from and opposite to it. These things cannot fail to rouse the hatred, contempt and reproach of the world, which hath often gone the length of persecuting the disciples to death. Men have indeed been in all ages endeavouring to reconcile the religion of Jesus to the world, and under the sanction of his name have trimmed up such a pliable well-bred system as to give little umbrage, seeing it allows plenty of scope for men's lusts. But then this cannot be the religion of Christ; nor can the world hate the professors of it as it hated him, John vii. 7. They are of the world, they speak of the world, and according to its taste and humour; therefore the world heareth them, 1 John iv. 5. and recognises and loves them as its own, John xv. 19. But the genuine religion of Jesus must ever be attended with the cross in this world; his kingdom and patience must ever go hand in hand; for it is declared, that all without exception that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution, 2 Tim. iii. 12. and that through much tribulation they must enter into the kingdom of God. Acts xiv. 22.

The original ground of all afflictions is sin. Had not sin entered into the world there would be no sufferings. If the world were not enemies to God, they would give

his people no trouble. If there were no sin in God's children themselves, there would be no occasion for the smarting discipline of the rod; besides, a great part of their sufferings in the very nature of things arises from their corruptions. Yet from all this it does not follow, that the greatest sufferers in this life are always the greatest sinners. Men are often distinguished in troubles who are not so in sin and wickedness. A striking instance of this we have in Job, of whom the Lord says, "there is "none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright "man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil." Job i. 8. Yet we see with what great affliction he was visited. 1. He was deprived of all his *worldly substance:* so that from being one of the most wealthy and opulent men in the east, he in one day becomes the most indigent and needy. Chap. i. 13, 18.—2. But what must have touched him nearer than this, was his being in one moment bereaved of a hopeful *family*, consisting of seven sons and three daughters, ver. 18, 19. Children are an heritage of the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is his reward. Dutiful and affectionate children are an unspeakable comfort to parents. They are the objects of their fondest affections, the comfort and support of their old age; in them they as it were flourish afresh, and have their house and name perpetuated. Judge then, ye who know the heart of a parent, what this good, this affectionate and tender-hearted father must have felt on receiving the dreadful tidings! He arose, rent his mantle, shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, ver. 20. And no wonder: It was but a little time before that he flourished like a stately cedar, when, quick as by the lightning's flash, he is stript of all his branches, his spreading honours are laid in the dust, and now he stands a solitary, bare and blasted trunk. Yet still he blesses and adores the sovereign hand that smote him, acknowledging that the source of all his comforts had a just right to withdraw them at pleasure; he worshipped and said, "Naked came I out of my mo-

"ther's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord "gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the "name of the Lord," ver. 21. But this was not all; for, 3. He was also grievously afflicted in his *own body*, Chap. ii. 7. Health and spirits will support a man under many difficulties; it is the basis of all earthly enjoyment, without which every thing becomes insipid, and even troublesome and disgusting. But Job is deprived of this, and smitten with sore boils, from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And now the poor man, in this abject and pitious plight, sits down in the dust, and scrapes himself with a potsherd; whilst the wife of his bosom, in smoothing his distress, and administering suitable consolations to his mind, urges him on to despair and blasphemy; yet still he retains his integrity, and acknowledges that it was proper he should receive evil as well as good at the hand of the Lord, ver. 10.—4. He was also greatly distressed and wounded in his *mind*, Chap. vi. 2—5. "The spirit of a "man (says Solomon) will sustain his infirmity, but a "wounded spirit who can bear." Prov. xviii. 14. When the mind of man is supported by divine consolations, they will sustain him under the greatest outward afflictions; but these were not only in a great measure withdrawn from Job, but the arrows of the Almighty were within him, the poison thereof drank up his spirits, and the terrors of God set themselves in array against him. 5. His distress was *constant* and *unintermitted*. Even in the night season, sleep, that beguiler of pain, and comfortable respite of the wretched, had forsaken him, or at least yielded him no refreshment, for in his slight and broken slumbers, he was scared with dreams and terrified with visions; so that upon the whole his soul chose strangling and death rather than life, chap. viii. 14, 15. 6. Add to all these the ill-timed and uncharitable surmises of his friends, who though they said many excellent things, yet proceeded upon a wrong maxim, viz. That the sufferings of this present life were proportioned to

men's sins, and that as Job was most grievously afflicted, he must of consequence have been a most notorious sinner, chap. iv. 6, 9. ch. viii. 3, 8. so that they were all but miserable comforters, ch. xvi. 2. What accumulated woe and distress did this favourite of the Amighty sustain? With regard to the afflictions of the gospel, they must fall heaviest upon the real children of God; for false professors can retract or temporize should matters come to extremity; but the true Christian will be faithful unto the death. So that upon the whole the Psalmist's observation will hold good, "Many are the afflictions of the righ-"teous." Psal. xxxiv. 19. They have often a large share of the common afflictions of mankind, and they have troubles peculiar to themselves.

On the other hand the wicked often enjoy much worldly prosperity, ease, and affluence. This is clearly set forth in Psal. lxxiii. "There are no bands in their death, but "their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other "men; neither are they plagued like other men. There-"fore pride compasseth them about as a chain, violence "covereth them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with "fatness; they have more than heart could wish." This became an occasion of stumbling to the Psalmist, and led him to doubt the justice of the divine administration, or whether indeed God took any concern in the affairs of this world; it was so unaccountable to him that the wicked should prosper, and the righteous be afflicted, that he represents God's people as saying, "How doth God know? "and is there knowledge in the Most High? Behold, these "are the ungodly who prosper in the world, they increase "in riches. Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and "washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long "have I been plagued, and chastened every morning." He was happily relieved, however, from these doubts, when he approached unto God in his sanctuary; there he was made to understand the slippery foundation of the wicked's happiness, the short date of their pleasures, and the

dreadfulness of their end; and when with this he was led to contrast the happiness of God's people in the enjoyment of his favour here, and of everlasting glory hereafter, he immediately blames himself for his doubts as arising from folly and brutish ignorance. The wicked may now enjoy their short-lived happiness unenvied by him; he is fully content with God as his portion, however afflicted in this world; in him his soul finds rest, in him all his desires are bounded and fully satisfied. "Thou wilt guide "me (says he) with thy counsel, and afterwards receive "me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and "there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. "My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength "of my heart, and my portion for ever." Ver. 24, 25, 26. The prosperity of the wicked, and afflictions of the righteous, are also held forth in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Luke xvi. The former was rich, arrayed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. The latter was in the lowest state of wretched indigence, and moreover was grievously afflicted with loathsome ulcers all over his body. The first received his good things in this life, the last his evil things. But O, what a reverse of condition doth death introduce each into! Then Lazarus was comforted whilst the rich voluptuary was tormented, ver. 25. It is the rewards and punishments of a future state, that clear up the mystery of providence, vindicate the equity of the divine government, and fully balance accounts as to the prosperity of the wicked, and afflictions of the righteous in this life. I proceed now to consider in a few particulars,

II. The salutary use and design of afflictions to God's people. They are intended,

1. To lead us to reflect on and consider our ways, Eccl. vii. 14. Hag. i. 5, 7. In the time of ease and prosperity, the mind is naturally thoughtless and inconsiderate. The enjoyments of life, and a brisk flow of animal spirits buoy up the mind, make the evil of sin often to

have but a slight impression, and supply, in a great measure, the happiness that arises from a good conscience and peace with God. But sanctified affliction reduces us to cool and sober reflection; when we view them as chastisements we are naturally led to enquire into the grounds of the Lord's controversy with us, Job x. 2. ch. xxxiv. 32. Formerly we were ready to heal up our soul, maladies slightly, and to speak peace when there was no peace; but afflictions tend to shake every false or superficial foundation of peace, confine our views to, and awaken our concern about our true and everlasting interest, and make us anxious to find out and remove every thing that interferes with it. Having found out the cause, instead of murmuring we shall justify the Lord, and repent and seek after him. This sanctified effect of affliction is held forth, Lam. iii. 39, 40, 41. "Wherefore doth a living man "complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? Let "us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord. "Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in "the heavens."

2. To humble and reduce the pride of our hearts. This was God's end in afflicting Israel, Deut. viii. 2.—Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxxii. 26.—Isa. xxxviii. 15.—Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 7.—To this we are exhorted, Jam. iv. 10. 1 Pet. v. 6. Prosperity and success feed the pride and vanity of man. It is said of the wicked, that because their strength is firm, and they are not in trouble as other men, nor plagued like other men; "therefore pride compasseth "them about as a chain." Psal. lxxiii. 5, 6. The children of God are not, altogether, free from this effect of prosperity. In such circumstances they are apt to be elated and lifted up, to confide and glory in their enjoyments, value themselves upon them, and in some measure to forget the giver of them, as well as the uncertain tenor by which they hold them. In such a case afflictions are excellent and necessary correctives. They lance the swelling imposthume of pride and haughtiness, and reduce

our vanity by removing the occasions of, or incentives to it, and give us an experimental conviction of our own meanness, wretchedness, frailty, and folly. This humbling effect of afflictions is set forth by the prophet, Lam. iii. 27, 28, 29. "It is good for a man that he bear the "yoke in his youth. He sitteth alone and keepeth si-"lence, because he hath borne it upon him. He putteth "his mouth in dust, if so be there may be hope."

III. The consolation which the scripture affords us under afflictions.

Few are qualified to comfort and soothe the minds of the afflicted. We may point out to them God's sovereign right to afflict them. We may shew them his greatness, holiness, and justice, and their own meanness, frailty, and sinfulness. We may observe to them that afflictions are the common lot of mortal man; that every man is punished less than he deserves; and that murmuring, impatience, or even excessive grief, are unreasonable, fruitless, and impious, and only increase their guilt, and augment their distress. These observations are indeed just, but are not suited of themselves to give relief. The mind weakened and broken by affliction cannot digest such strong food. Occupied and agitated by present distress, it has not composure sufficient to moralize and reason; and what appeared strong and quieting reasons in the time of ease, will very often be found ineffectual in the hour of trouble. It must be something tender and comfortable, something that shews the mercy and benefit, as well as justice of the affliction, that can either properly gain their attention, or alleviate their pain. It is God's prerogative effectually to bind up the broken hearted, and comfort them that mourn. It is only he that can speak a word in season to the heart, and manifest himself as the speaker. Yet he hath appointed means; he hath furnished us with abundant matter of consolation in such cases in his word, and he hath enjoined us to comfort one another by it. But after all how few are qualified for this

office! It is not enough that we speak good matter, but that we should speak because we *believe*—that we should speak from *experience* of afflictions and divine support under them;—that we should enter into the feelings of the afflicted, adapt ourselves to them, and speak with tender sympathy and affectionate concern. I shall, however, point out a few considerations that may be of use to support the mind under affliction. To handle the subject minutely would require that I should mention the different kinds of affliction, and the consolation suitable to each; but I intend at present to hint only at a few general thoughts that will apply to every kind of them.

1. The afflictions of God's people are all *appointed by himself*, and not casual or at the pleasure of their enemies. We are apt to look too much to second causes, and forget that it is the hand of the Lord. This was a quieting consideration to David in his affliction; "I was "dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it." Psal. xxxix. 9. Job never complains of the Sabeans and Chaldeans, nor does he attribute the death of his children to mere accident, but he takes all as from the hand of the Lord, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away." &c. So in this chapter the apostle leads us to view afflictions as the *chastening of the Lord*. Now, though it is a fearful thing for the wicked to fall into the hands of the living God as the avenger of apostacy; yet it is a comfortable consideration to his people, that in all their afflictions they are in the hand of their gracious and merciful God; that troubles come not upon them by chance, nor are inflicted at the pleasure of their enemies. His providence is so special, condescending and minute, that not a sparrow falls to the ground without him, nor is forgotten before him, Luke xii. 6. how then can he forget his people? They are of more value than many sparrows, and even the very hairs of their head are all numbered, ver. 7. These are words of the faithful and true witness, who came to declare his Father's name.

2. God not only appoints all our afflictions, but they are under his special *direction* and *management*, as to their —Nature—Degree—Continuance—and Effects.—What a comfortable reflection is this! To have every circumstance of our distress under the management of such a hand. He is most intimately acquainted with our frame and feelings,—He is possesed of unerring wisdom, and infinite goodness, and therefore our affairs cannot miscarry in his hand. So minute and tender is his care of us in such circumstances, that he is said to make all our bed in our sickness, Psal. xli. 3.

3. Afflictions are among the "all things that work together for good to them that love God," Rom. viii. 28. We do not naturally doubt this with respect to prosperity; the doubt lies upon the side of adversity. We can easily see how good should produce good: but we cannot so easily perceive how good should be educed out of evil, or how affliction is conducive to our happiness. We are rather apt to say with Jacob on the supposed loss of his children, "all these things are against me." Gen. xlii. 36. But the apostle has a particular eye to affliction, when he affirms that all things work together for good to them that love God. There he knew the pinch lay; and his design is to show that all those things which for the present are not joyous but grievous, and which therefore we are most ready to construe as adverse to us, are notwithstanding under the management of a wise and gracious God really co-operating for our good. He enumerates a number of these afflictive things, ver. 35, 39. and shows that we are more than conquerors over them, and that they shall never be able to separate us from the love of God.—1. Because God is for us, who then can be against us? ver. 31.—2. Because he has foreknown and predestinated us to be conformed to the image of his Son in sufferings here, and immortality and glory in a future world, and nothing can disconcert his plan or frustrate his purpose, ver. 29, 30.—3. Because, however adverse

these things may appear at present; yet God will make them all co-operate in subserviency to the ultimate good of his chosen. He says, *We know* this, i. e. We are certain that this will be the result of all things here, whatever appearances they may have to the contrary. We are assured and fixed in this, that they shall work together for our good, though we cannot at present fully trace how they do so. If our minds were firmly established in this truth, it would make us rejoice even in tribulation.

4. He who afflicts us is our *father*. In this view he is held forth in verse 2. This is a most endearing relation, and fraught with every ground of consolation, whatever distress we may be in; and so we find the church when in distress pleading this relation, Isa. lxiii. 16. We all know the benefit and tenderness of such a relation among men; but God excels all earthly parents in every thing that belongs to that relation as far as the divine nature excels the human. Men may and do often come short of their duty as parents. They may either through a fond and foolish indulgence spare the needful rod, or on the other hand through caprice or passion chastise us for their pleasure; but God can never err in either of these respects, he always chastises us seasonably, suitably, and for our profit that we may be partakers of his holiness. 2. This relation shows his *tender love* and *compassion*. Parents may be unnatural; a woman may forget her sucking child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb; but the Lord declares though this should in some instances happen, yet he will not forget his children, Isa. xlix. 15. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. Psal. ciii. 13. When he afflicts them it is not willingly, Lam. iii, 32, 33. When he lays on his hand it is with the yearning reluctant bowels of a father, Jer. xxxi. 20. and he declares that all his corrections are in love, dealing with us as with children and not as bastards, Heb. xii. 6, 7. However affectionate

parents may be, they may be ignorant in many cases of what is for the real good of their children, or they may be unable to accomplish it; but none of those things can be the case with our heavenly father, who is possessed of infinite love, wisdom and power. If under affliction we would but duly reflect that it is the kind hand of our heavenly father, it would be a continual source of consolation to us; but the apostle intimates that we are ready to forget this, ver. 5.

5. Let us consider Job's comfort under his great affliction, ch. xix. 25—28. "I know that my Redeemer liveth."—1. He *liveth.* His earthly substance was gone, but his main portion was secure; his children were *dead,* who were his greatest earthly comforts, but his Redeemer lived. Thus David comforts himself, Psal. xviii. 46. and thus the Redeemer comforts John, Rev. i. 18.—2. He who liveth is the *Redeemer,* the *Goel,* the kinsman to whom the right of redemption belongs. Though his earthly inheritance was gone, and though he had forfeited, by sin, the heavenly inheritance; yet as his kinsman lived who was able to redeem it, and to redeem him to it, this was sufficient comfort to all his affliction.—3. This Redeemer was *his,* and the only friend he could call his; but he was infinitely more than all friends, a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.—(1.) He was *nearer* to him than all earthly friends. The union betwixt Christ and his members is infinitely more close than any earthly connection.—(2.) It is more *lasting;* others may change their affection, or the connection is dissolved by death, not so this.—(3.) Infinitely more *beneficial.* Earthly connections may afford us some comfort; but how inferior to that which results from a conscious sense of the redeemer's love! These cannot avail us beyond death; but then it is that we properly come to the enjoyment of the happiness of this relation. Their distress may often give us trouble; but he is for ever blessed, and will make us blessed with himself; for he is our Redeemer and has the

keys of hell and death. Therefore, though after our skin worms destroy this body, yet in our flesh we shall see God.

6. The scripture declares that our light afflictions which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 2 Cor. iv. 17.—1. Though they are not joyous but grievous, yet they are but *light* in comparison either of the happiness or misery of a future state.—2. They are but short and *momentary*. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy doth arise in the morning.—3. They tend to glory and happiness; they work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

No. V.

ILLUSTRATION OF CHAP. XII. 28, 29.

Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be removed, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God *is* a consuming fire.

These verses contain,

I. An Exhortation, "*Let us have* (or hold fast) *grace* "*—serve God acceptably,*" *&c.*

II. The motives enforcing it, "*We receiving a king-* "*dom which cannot be moved—our God is a consum-* "*ing fire.*"

I shall offer a few remarks in the way of illustration of both particulars.

I. We are exhorted to have, or hold fast, grace.

1. *Grace*, in scripture, has various significations; but when the grace of God is intended, it may be reduced to two, viz. his *free favour*, and its *effects*.

(1.) It signifies the *free* and *unmerited favour*, or love of God, to the children of men. This is its primary sense from which all the rest are derived. It imports the free and voluntary motion of God's own mind, without any cause from *without himself* to excite or incline him, or even any cause from *within himself* to necessitate him in the exercise of it, but merely the self-moving choice of his own will, regulated by infinite wisdom. It is opposed to every consideration of worth or merit in its objects, and

hence it is often contrasted with all *works of righteousness* either done or foreseen to be done by the creature, which might be supposed, in any degree, to excite or influence it, see Rom. xi. 6. Eph. ii. 8, 9, 10. 2 Tim. i. 9. It implies not only the want of worth, but the highest guilt, and deepest misery of its objects; for it has a respect to men in this situation, and has no room for its full exertion, but upon such objects, Eph. ii. 4—8. and so it must rise to our view in proportion to our sense of sin and misery, Rom. v. 20, 21. 1 Tim. i. 14, 15.

(2.) It signifies frequently the *effects* of God's free favour, or the various expressions whereby it is actually exercised and vented towards its object, such as—1. The whole constitution of things established under the new covenant, in which sense it is opposed to the state of things under the law. Thus the law was given by Moses, but *grace* came by Jesus Christ, John i. 17. Believers are not under the law, but under *grace*, Rom. vi. 14. Whosoever are justified by the law, are fallen from grace, Gal. v. 4. Grace in these passages is expressive of a dispensation wherein we freely enjoy all the benefits of redemption, such as justification, adoption, and eternal life, Rom. v. 15. 1 Pet. i. 13. 2. It sometimes signifies the effect of the word and Spirit of God upon the hearts and lives of men. So it is said, Barnabas when he saw the *grace* of God in the christians at Antioch, he was glad, Acts xi. 23.—the communication which is to the use of edifying ministers *grace* unto the hearers, Eph. iv. 29. i. e. it builds them up in knowledge, faith, love, and hope.—Christians are commanded to sing with *grace* in their hearts, Col. iii. 16. i. e. by the inward influence of the holy Spirit, and with spiritual and devout affections. Paul says the Philippians were partakers of his *grace*, Phil. i. 7. i. e. were partakers with him of grace in the good work that was begun in them, ver. 6. in their patience under sufferings, love, knowledge, and judgment, ver. 9. 29, 30. Christians are exhorted, instead of being

led away with the error of the wicked, and falling from their own steadfastness, to grow in *grace*, 2 Pet. iii. 18. i. e. in every fruit of the Spirit. 3. The gifts of the Spirit for edification are called grace. Having therefore gifts differing according to the *grace* that is given to us, Rom. xii. 6.—unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gifts of Christ, Eph. iv. 7. see also 1 Cor. i. 4—10. 4. Liberality in giving is called grace, 2 Cor. viii. 6, 7. and the gift freely given is so called, ver. 19. From all these passages it appears that grace signifies—the free favour of God—the effects of this in the work of redemption—the influence of the truth upon our minds, which is also called the gifts and fruits of the Spirit —and the effect of it in our practice in the work and labour of love towards the brethren, which is an imitation of God's grace.

2. To *have*, or hold fast *grace*, in this passage, signifies to continue firm in the faith of God's free favour, and love to the guilty, as expressed in the work of redemption by Jesus Christ, and declared in the gospel. There are many exhortations in the New Testament, and particularly in this epistle, of the same import. Christ says, "Abide "in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit "of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, ex- "cept ye abide in me," John xv. 4. Paul and Barnabas persuaded the Jews and religious proselytes "to continue "in the grace of God," Acts xiii. 43. and confirmed the souls of the disciples, "exhorting them to continue in the "faith," ch. xiv. 22. i. e. the faith of the gospel; and "with purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord," ch. xi. 23. Of the same import are the exhortations to the Hebrews, to "hold fast their profession," Heb. iv. 14— to "hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the "hope firm unto the end," ch. iii. 6.—to "hold fast the "confession of hope without wavering," ch. x. 23. And it is opposed to drawing back, ch. x. 38—letting the things which we have heard concerning the great salva-

tion slip, ch. ii. 1.—turning back unto the law as the ground of acceptance, or cleaving to this present world as our portion and happiness, which is called *falling from grace*, Gal. v. 4—*failing of the grace of God*, Heb. xii. 15. In opposition to this they are exhorted to have or hold fast grace.

(2.) To have or hold fast grace, is not merely to believe the doctrine of the grace of God as exhibited in the gospel, and to continue in the belief of it, but also to have it working effectually in us, producing its genuine effects in all the fruits of the Spirit, such as love, joy, hope, peace, humility, patience, meekness, &c. which are also called grace, as being the inseparable effects of knowing the grace of God in truth. In this sense the word *have*, which literally agrees with the original, is most proper, q. d.—"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which can-"not be moved, let our minds be so disposed by this dis-"play of divine grace, and influenced by the motives "thence arising, as that we may serve God acceptably "with reverence and godly fear." Indeed it is evident that both these views must necessarily be included in the text; for how can we hold fast the grace of God without its proper effect upon our hearts, unless it be in the way of speculation and presumption? And how can that grace have its proper effect upon our minds unless we know and firmly believe it. And it is certain that both these are necessary to our serving God acceptably, which leads me to consider,

The other branch of the exhortation, viz. that we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. And here I notice that there are two things which hinder men from serving God acceptably. 1. Slavish fear, or the spirit of bondage. 2. Presumption, self-dependence, and self-righteousness. The grace of the gospel is equally opposed to both of these.

If we would serve God acceptably without slavish fear or the spirit of bondage, we must hold fast grace, wherein

we have the most amiable display of God's character as love, in giving his Son to be the propitiation for our sins, —we must hold fast the grace of the *atonement* and free justification by the blood of Christ, and that not only on our first believing, but for continued cleansing from our sins, otherwise we shall soon fall under the spirit of bondage and fear, and our access to, and intercourse with God, will be marred. Our peace must still be renewed and maintained by that which at first produced it. Therefore in confessing our sins, we must hold fast the grace of free remission through Christ's blood, which cleanseth us from all sin, and of his advocateship with the Father, who is faithful and just to forgive us our sins for his sake, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, 1 John i. 9. ch. ii. 1, 2. Under the law, in their approaches to God, they had expiatory sacrifices, and divers washings, in order to obtain access to, and acceptance with him, but these only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh; but in holding fast the grace of the gospel, we have the spirit and truth of these in the blood and sacrifice of Christ, which purges the worshipper so as to have no more conscience of unremitted sin, Heb. x. 2.—sprinkles the heart from an evil conscience, ver. 22. or purges the conscience from dead works, (i. e. works deserving death) for this very purpose, to serve the living God, ch. ix. 14. Hereby our peace with, love to, and joy and delight in God are renewed, so that we draw near to him in the full assurance of faith, and serve him acceptably, worshipping him in the spirit, rejoicing in Christ Jesus, Phil. iii. 3.—We must hold fast the grace of adoption in opposition to the spirit of bondage and fear, if we would serve him acceptably. Our Lord hath taught us in our approaches to call upon him as our Father; and if we only consider what is implied in this endearing and tender relation, it is every way suited to inspire us with filial reverence, confidence, and love, in serving him. It imports his love, tenderness, and pity, his constant care, readiness to hear, and bounty

in bestowing all necessary blessings; and all these are in him in an infinite degree, transcending every thing to be found in the best of earthly parents. We must also hold fast the grace of eternal glory.

I come now to show how it is opposed to presumption and self-righteousness. We are exhorted to hold fast grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire.

1. In the grace of the gospel, or the plan of salvation by Jesus Christ, we have the clearest and most striking display of the character of God, particularly his infinite justice, holiness, and opposition to sin. The wrath of God was formerly revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men in the awful judgments inflicted both upon nations and individuals; but none of these, nor all of them put together, give such an awful display of his infinite opposition to sin, as the judgment inflicted upon his own Son, when he stood in the room of the unjust, and bore the punishment of their sins in his own body on the tree. God's holy law, as delivered to Israel, also manifested his holiness and justice, both in the manner of its delivery, the purity of its precepts, and in its awful sanction, denouncing death upon the transgressor. But never was the purity and extent of the law, its eternal and indispensable obligation, or the awful nature of its curse, so fully and clearly manifested, as in the obedience and death of the Son of God, whereby the law was magnified and made honourable, and the holiness and justice of the Lawgiver displayed to the highest advantage. This, however, can only be seen by that faith whereby we hold fast grace. An unbeliever can see no more of divine holiness and justice in the obedience and death of Christ, than in that of any other good man; but when we perceive the *dignity* of the person who suffered —his *relation* and *dearness* to the Father, being the supreme object of his love—with the *nature* and *design* of his sufferings, they being the punishment or curse due to

our sins, and necessary to make an atonement to divine justice for them; can any thing give us a deeper impression of the holiness and justice of God, and of his infinite opposition to sin? Could a meaner sacrifice have answered the end, we have no reason to think that he who made the worlds should by himself have purged our sins. If the sufferings of any of his creatures could have made an atonement, and given a full display of his holiness and justice in forgiving it, we may well think that he would have spared his own only and well-beloved Son; but though the darling of his soul prays repeatedly with strong crying and tears that if it was possible the cup might pass from him, yet so inflexible is his justice, so untainted his holiness, and so infinite his hatred of sin, that he struck at it as it were through his own bowels, and made him in whom his soul delighted, drink out the very last dreg of the cup of sufferings due to it. When Israel saw the Lord's great work in redeeming them from Egypt, and destroying the Egyptians, it is said they "feared the Lord, "and believed the Lord and his servant Moses," Exod. xiv. 31. and upon that occasion they sang the song of Moses, saying, "Who is like unto thee, O Jehovah, among "the gods? who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness, "fearful in praises, doing wonders?" ch. xv. 11. That divine work of mercy and judgment was so far from filling them with presumption and self-confidence, that it struck them with a solemn awe of God's matchless greatness, power, and holiness; and they acknowledged that he ought to be worshipped and praised with fear and reverence. But what was that typical redemption, and the display of divine power, justice and holiness on Pharaoh and his host, to the redemption of Jesus Christ, and the display of divine power, justice, and holiness, given in his death? In the former he punished his rebellious and audacious enemies; in the latter his own immaculate and well-beloved Son! How much more then ought this to impress our minds with reverence and godly fear? Ac-

cordingly the redeemed company apply the song of Moses to the great salvation, and the awful display of the divine character manifested therein, both in the way of mercy and judgment, Rev. xv. 3, 4. "Great and marvellous are "thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy "ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, "O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy." When Isaiah got a view of the glory of the Lord, he was unable to abide his immediate presence on account of his unworthiness; even the seraphim covered their faces with their wings with the profoundest reverence, as unworthy to behold him, and cried one to another, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his "glory," Isa. vi. 1—8. This was only a prophetic vision of the glory of the Lord which was afterwards to be clearly manifested in the face of Christ, who is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person. If this visible emblematical glory of the Lord struck the holy man of God with such profound awe, reverence, and godly fear, how much more ought not the truth and spirit of it to have this effect, which now shines clearly in the gospel, and is the glory that excelleth?

True, indeed, the gospel also holds forth in the strongest light the glory of the divine mercy and grace towards the guilty children of men; and this, as has been already shown, delivers all who believe it from that spirit of bondage and slavish fear which so much prevailed under the former dispensation, and gives them a holy filial confidence before him. But this is so far from expelling reverence and godly fear, that it affords the strongest motives to it. Many, indeed, have handled the doctrines of grace in such an unhappy manner as to exclude, in a great measure, this reverence and godly fear. They have taken such a partial view of the divine character, as being all love, tenderness, and indulgence, as in a great measure to have lost sight of the awful majesty, holiness, and justice of his grace; and so represent the Divine Majesty rather

as a weak, indulgent, fond, and doating parent, than as the just God and the Saviour. Self-love and self-indulgence are ever apt to make men form such ideas of God as are most suited to their own inclinations; and though they may not proceed so far as to imagine he is altogether such an one as themselves; yet they cannot help thinking that he respects their persons—that their sins are not so displeasing to him as the sins of the wicked—and that at any rate he is engaged never to punish them. Such views of grace, if followed out their full length, and held consistently, will in a great measure expel that reverence and godly fear enjoined in the text; but the scriptural view of the grace of God will have a very opposite effect: for the apostle represents it as the great motive to reverence and godly fear. Does the gospel hold forth the grace of God's condescension in having spoken to us by his Son, by whom he made the worlds, and whom he hath appointed heir of all things? Heb. i. 2, 3. then he expects we should reverence his Son, and give the most earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip, and so incur a more dreadful punishment than the despisers of the word spoken by angels, chap. i. 1—4. Did he deliver him up to the death for us, that he might in a consistency with his holiness forgive us our sins, and be just in justifying the ungodly? and does not the Psalmist tell us, that there is forgiveness with him for this very end, *that he may be feared?* Psal. cxxx. 4. The same thing is affirmed by Solomon, 1 Kings viii. 39, 40. The redeemed know that their sins are forgiven them, but at the same time they also well know, that this forgiveness flows to them in the channel of the blood and wounds of the Son of God's love! This must necessarily give them the deepest impressions of the evil nature of sin, and of the divine indignation against it; and must lead them to think that if these things were done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry! The gospel display of God's mercy and grace is guarded with the

most awful manifestation of his justice, holiness, and infinite opposition to sin; so that we cannot be relieved by the one without being struck with the other. We cannot receive the sense of divine forgiveness into a fearless, irreverent, stout and unbroken heart. Indeed such can have no proper relish for the blessedness of so divine a benefit, however they may speculate about and boast of their being justified. And though the Lord justifies no man on account of his humility and contrition, yet it is only such that he promises to comfort, Isa. lvii. 15. "Thus "saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, "whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy "place; with him also that is of a humble and contrite "spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive "the heart of the contrite ones." Agreeably to this it is said, Psal. xxxiv. 18. "The Lord is nigh unto them "that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a "contrite spirit." And Psal. cxxxviii. "Though the Lord "be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the "proud he knoweth afar off." See also Jam. iv. 6. The gospel gives us the fullest display of the divine goodness, and it is promised that when this goodness should be manifested in the coming of the Messiah, and in the blessings of his kingdom, "the children of Israel shall return, "and seek the Lord their God, and shall fear the Lord "and his goodness in the latter days." Hos. iii. 5. Not only his infinite greatness, justice and holiness, but his goodness affords us the strongest motive for reverence and godly fear; from this arises the deepest sense of our obligation to love and gratitude, and consequently of the guilt of sin and evil of rebellion. But this is not all. As the greatness of his goodness must necessarily aggravate the guilt of rebellion, so must it in proportion heighten its punishment. Injured and despised love and goodness will at last break forth in the fury of jealousy, and in the consuming fire of indignation to devour the adversary, Heb. x. 26—32. This the Scripture every where holds

forth, and particularly the text, which exhorts us to hold fast grace that we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, from this consideration, that *our God is a consuming fire.* The Lord does not leave our compliance with the gospel merely to the generosity and gratitude of the human heart; for however noble these principles are, yet the hearts even of believers themselves are not always under their vigorous influence. In short the human heart is not so generous and grateful in this imperfect state as many imagine, and he must be a stranger to his own heart that does not feel this. We need therefore to have our fears as well as hopes stimulated, and the grace of the gospel affords sufficient motives for both. An apprehension of danger and due concern for our own safety is therefore one ingredient in godly fear.

2. The gospel not only gives us the clearest view of the divine character, but also of our own. It opens up our meanness and lowness as creatures, and our guilt and pollution as sinners in the strongest point of view. It shows us that we are altogether hopeless and helpless in ourselves, dead in trespasses and sins, and unable to do any thing to please God, and that all our righteousnesses are as filthy and abominable rags in the sight of a holy God. The whole plan of divine grace shows this, which is all calculated to abase the creature and exalt God, Isa. ii. 10—18. to empty us of pride and self-righteousness, and to lead us to glory only in the Lord, 1 Cor. i. 27—31. This humility and self-abasement is another great ingredient in reverence and godly fear. And therefore we must hold the grace of the gospel whereby we may be delivered from pride and self-righteousness in God's service. The parable of the Pharisee and the Publican shows the difference of a presumptuous self-righteous service, and the service recommended in the text, Luke xviii. 10—15. Rev. iii. 17. Though the subjects of Christ's kingdom have access to God with freedom and confidence, yet they are exhorted to serve God with fear

and rejoice with trembling, Psalm. ii. 11. Justice and judgment are the establishment of his throne, mercy and truth go before his face; so that while his people rejoice in his name all the day, they also see that he is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of them that are about him, Psal. lxxxix. 7, 14, 16.

3. The grace of the gospel teaches us that none can approach unto a holy God, stand before him, or have acceptance with him, in any of our services but through a mediator and the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

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